UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Portraits of Power: The Representations of Imperial Women in the Byzantine Empire

Lauren Ann Wainwright

Supervisors: Professor Leslie Brubaker & Dr Elizabeth L'Estrange

Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman, and Modern Greek Studies, College of Arts and Law

A thesis submitted in fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Byzantine Studies

September 2018

Synopsis

Through an analysis of physical depictions and literary records, this thesis explored what messages the representations of Byzantine empresses conveyed. It showed that, though embedded in tradition, the representation of the empress was not fixed. Instead, it changed and adapted over the long chronological span of the Byzantine Empire, as a consistently visible fixture of imperial hierarchy.

The thesis first tracked the transformation from the indistinguishable elite Roman woman, to the distinctive imperial costume and the creation of the office of the empress. Concurrently tracing iconographical changes revolving around Christianity and imperial triumph motifs, mixed with entrenched idealisations of motherhood and security, the Late Antique model of imperial rule developed into the presentation of the emperor and the empress as the imperial unit. This broadens out from the Middle Byzantine period, where the office of the empress is used to legitimise and reaffirm dynastic portrayals, as well as their roles within regencies, sole rule, and the legitimisation of emperors.

The visible, political action of patronage is also explored, underlined as a key role of the office, alongside competitive agency. Together with portraiture, the office of the empress was a recognisable, imperial 'brand' that constructed a narrative of imperial power.

To my mother, Bernadette,

Who taught me how to read

And everything else that I know

Acknowledgements

First, my thanks go to the University of Birmingham who accepted me into the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek studies. By helping to fund my supplementary projects, Birmingham has made my years here much more fulfilling. Continued support for my department is what makes it such a fantastic place to study and such a great community. I would also like to thank Midlands 3 Cities (Arts and Humanities Research Council) for funding the main portion of my PhD and for so many opportunities; travel to national and international conferences and research trips to Istanbul, Ravenna, Venice, and Washington D.C. have greatly enriched my work. Other institutions have been instrumental also: my thanks go to the Barber Institute of Fine Arts which has been an essential resource, particularly the coin collection, and for allowing me to use its images free of charge; Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection granted me a truly informative short-term residency; and the libraries of the University of Central Lancashire, Leeds, Oxford and the Senate House, were always helpful and open to me. I would also like to thank Flavia Vanni, and Flora and William Watson for their assistance with images.

My profound thanks also go to my two supervisors. Leslie Brubaker has been an inspiration since I first met her in 2012. Her knowledge and passion for history, feminism, and my topic never ceases to amaze me. We have bonded over good food, good wine, and great cats; I wouldn't have had another supervisor for the world. She and her husband, Chris Wickham, are tireless in their support and encouragement. I would also like to thank Liz L'Estrange for her contributions during my PhD; she thought of me even while away on maternity and research leave. My thanks go to all the other lecturers at Birmingham who encouraged me; Dimiter Angelov, who first introduced me to the study of Byzantium, and Ruth Macrides, whose enthusiasm for history stimulated my interests and who whipped my woeful Greek into much better shape. Daniel Reynold's door was always open to me for many words of advice, and Maria Vrij's expertise on anything and everything numismatic was always shared in incredible detail. I would also like to thank my external examiners, Shaun Tougher and Margaret Mullett, for their help and kind support. I owe all those who have shared their knowledge with me, and can only assure the reader that any mistakes to be found are completely my own.

As the – paraphrased – saying goes, no woman is an island. I can never truly repay all the support and kindness I have received over these past years, and the happiness that I have shared with my friends and family; I can only express my heartfelt thanks. My instantaneous friendship with Anna Kelley was an unexpected blessing, and her advice and support often a god-send. I doubt I would have had so many interesting conversations and so much fun, if not for her. I am so excited to see her richly-deserved academic career unfold. To Maria Vrij, who gave me a home (including the company of the best of cats, Gelimer) and a shoulder to cry on, I owe you more than one glass of wine! To Francisco Lopez-Santos Kornberger, who took part in anything I asked him to, who read my first article, and whose genuine kindness and passion for Byzantium – who else would make two Byzantine board-games? – is second to none. Victoria Schuppert and Oonagh Pennington-Wilson were amazing company and helped me remember that there is so much more. I will miss them all more than I can say.

To the members of my department, including those honorary and alumni, all of you have my thanks for letting me be a part of your lives and own academic journeys, for interesting and educational conversations, and for a lot of enjoyment over the years together, especially Mike 'Burly' Burling, Joseph Parsonage, Ruth Caddick, Jessica Varsallona, Flavia Vanni, Alex Feldman, Weisheng Lin, Annika Asp, Maroula Perisanidi, Steph Novasio, Laura Clark, Penny Mantouvalou, Alessandro Carabia, Andrea Mattiello, Christina Armoni, Rachael Baines and Liam McLeod. To all the wonderful and interesting people in the academic sphere who have inspired me over the years, I appreciate both your time and your friendship. To my many students, thank you for helping me to get over my initial shyness, and for being so fun and so curious to learn: the teacher can often end up learning just as much in the process!

My family have been incredibly supportive throughout, especially through the hardest parts; always ready with a witty remark or supportive comment. Mark and Kate Wainwright proof-read everything that I asked them to, even though they both prefer modern history – or 'recent events' as I like to call it – and were always willing to read more. Thank you to both of my parents, Mark and Bernadette, for your love and for always telling me that I could do anything if I put my mind to it. Your reminders that actually sitting down and writing was more important than any other work were much appreciated! My brother, Michael (and Sima!), keeps me grounded and my sister, Kate, is my eternal cheerleader; thank you both for always

being there when I need a sympathetic ear, advice, or just to laugh. James and Jazz (2000-2018), who I miss immensely, were always there for a supportive cuddle.

Finally, I would like to thank William Watson, who has good-naturedly sat through many evenings with me while I focused only on my computer screen or talked endlessly about Byzantium and feminist issues (sometimes even the two together!), listened to my stresses and frustrations, and, unfailingly, encouraged me to carry on. Know that you have my love and eternal gratitude for your smiles, laughter, and understanding, especially through 2017-8. This journey has been a testament to your genuine character, patience, and sense of humour. It is very likely that this thesis would not have been completed without you.

Notes

All spellings will stay as close to their original form as possible; for example, unless names are much more commonly known in their Latinised forms, they will stay in their original Greek form. Thus, Constantine, Leo and Basil will remain the same, but changes occur with *porphyrogennete*, Palaiologina, and Herakleios. Names will be hyphenated to indicate the adoption of new names, with the birth name coming first. Thus, the case study of the twelfth century will be known as Piroška-Eirene.

In the same vein, coins will be known by the appropriate name in relation to their date, so as to keep with modern numismatic conventions: thus, Byzantine gold coins will be known as *solidi* until the seventh century, after which they will be *nomismata*. 'Bronze' coins will be known more appropriately as 'base metal'.

Texts will also either be known by their Greek titles or a close translation into English: Πρὸς τὸν ἴδιον υἱὸν Ρωμανόν will thus be discussed as *To My Own Son Romanos*, instead of the Latin, *De Administrando Imperio*, but Ἔκθεσις τῆς βασιλείου τάξεως will be referred to as the more commonly-known *Book of Ceremonies*.

Where possible, the English translation will appear in the main body of the text and the original Greek will appear in the relevant footnote.

Abbreviations

AHR	*American Historical Review*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AnalBoll	*Analecta Bollandiana*, eds. H. Delehaye *et al*, 138 vols (Brussels, 1882-).
ArtBull	*The Art Bulletin*
ASS	*Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana*, 68 vols (Brussels, 1643-1779; Paris & Rome, 1866-87; Brussels, 1965-70).
BA	*Byzantina Australiensia*, 25 vols (Canberra etc. & Leiden, 1981-).
BAV	*Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,* Vatican City
BHG	*Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca,* 3rd ed. F. Halkin, (Brussels, 1957).
BIFA	*Barber Institute of Fine Arts*, Birmingham
BL	*British Library*, London
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
BnF	*Bibliothèque nationale de France*, Paris
BS	*Byzantina Symmeikta*
BSl	*Byzantinoslavica*
Byz	*Byzantion: Revue internationale des études byzantines*
ByzForsch	*Byzantinische Forschungen*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CCCM	*Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis,* eds. A. Hoste *et al*, 306 vols (Turnhout, 1971-).
CIG	*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, eds. A. Böckh *et al*, (Berlin, 1825-60).

CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum,* eds. T. Mommsen *et al*, 17 vols (Berlin, 1853-1986).
CFHB	*Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae,* eds. H. G. Beck *et al,* 50 vols (Berlin, 1967-).
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiastricorum Latinorum,* eds. J. Vahten *et al,* 100 vols (Vienna, 1864-2012).
CSHB	*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae,* eds. B. G. Niebuhr & I. Bekker *et al,* 50 vols (Bonn, 1828-37).
DOC	*Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection,* eds. A. Bellinger & P. Grierson, 5 vols (Washington D. C., 1966-99).
DOML	*Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library*, 66 vols (Washington D.C., 2010-).
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
DOS	*Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks*
DOT	*Dumbarton Oaks Texts,* 14 vols (Washington D.C., 1968-).
EHR	*The English Historical Review*
GR	*Greece and Rome*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*, eds. A. Kirchhoff & U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 49 vols (Berlin, 1860-).
ILCV	*Inscriptiones latinae selectee*, ed. E. Diehl, 4 vols (Berlin, 1961-7).
JLA	*Journal of Late Antiquity*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*

JRA		*Journal of Roman Archaeology*
JRS		*Journal of Roman Studies*
Loeb		*Loeb Classical Library*, eds. T. E. Page & W. H. D. Rouse *et al*, 544 vols (London, 1911-1933; Cambridge, MA, 1933-).
LSA		*Last Statues of Antiquity Database,* R. R. R. Smith & B. Ward-Perkins *et al.* (Oxford, 2012-).
MGH		*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, eds. G. Heinrich Pertz & G. Waitz (Berlin, 1826-).
		with series:
	AA	*Auctores Antiquissimi*
	BDKz	*Die Briefe der Deutschen Kaiserzeit*
	SRG	*Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*
	SS	*Scriptores*
MTT		*Medieval Texts in Translation*, (Washington D.C., 1996-).
ODB		*The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. P. Kazhdan, (Oxford, 1991).
PG		*Patriologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 161 vols (Paris, 1844-66).
PL		*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, ed. J.-P Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1844-55).
REB		*Revue des études byzantines*
RIC		*Roman Imperial Coinage,* eds. R. A. G. Carson & C. H. V. Sutherland, 10 vols (London, 1924-94).
SPBS		*Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies*, 21 vols (Farnham & Burlington, VA, 1992-2013; London & New York, NY, 2017-).

TM	*Travaux et mémoires*
TTB	*Translated Texts for Byzantinists*, 10 vols (Liverpool, 2012-).
TTH	*Translated Texts for Historians,* 77 vols (Liverpool, 1987-).
ZRVI	*Zbornik radova vizantoloskog instituta*

Figure List

1. Figure List for the Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses

1.1. Octavia:

Follis depicting the busts of Octavia, on right, and Marc Antony, on left, on the obverse; the reverse depicts galleys.

(BIFA, R0805)

1.2. Tetrarchy:

Four co-joined porphyry statues of the Tetrarchy.

(Venice, Piazza San Marco; photograph is my own)

1.3. Tetrarchy:

Two co-joined porphyry statues of the Tetrarchy on column.

(BAV; digitised by LSA, LSA-840)

1.4. Tetrarchy:

Two co-joined statues as part of a relief, with painted remnants.

(Izmit; Ağtürk, 'New Tetrarchic Relief', pp.411-4)

1.5. Helena:

Follis of Helena, with bust on obverse, as *nobilissima femina*.

(*RIC VII*, cat.50; digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.6. Fausta:

Follis of Fausta, with bust on obverse, as *nobilissima femina*, and eight-pointed star on reverse.

(*RIC VII*, cat.51; digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.7. Galeria Valeria:

Solidus of Galeria Valeria, with bust on obverse and the figure of Venus Victory on the reverse.

(BIFA, R2667)

1.8. Galeria Valeria:

Follis of Galeria Valeria, with bust, wearing laurel wreath, on obverse.

(*RIC VI*, cat.34 (Thessaloniki); digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.9. Helena:

Follis of Helena, with bust on the obverse.

(*RIC VII*, cat.218 (Siskia); digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.10. Fausta:

Follis of Fausta, with bust on the obverse.

(*RIC VII*, cat.205 (Siskia); digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.11. Helena:

Solidus of Helena, with bust on the obverse, and the personification of Securitas on the reverse.

(*RIC VII*, cat.79 (Nikomedia); digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.12. Fausta:

Solidus of Fausta, with bust on the obverse, and the personification of Salus on the reverse.

(*RIC VII*, cat.77 (Nikomedia); digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.13. Helena (Deceased):

Follis of Helena, with bust on the obverse, and the personification of Pax on the reverse.

(BIFA, R3144)

1.14. Theodora (Deceased):

Follis of Theodora, with bust on the obverse, and the personification of Pietas on the reverse.

(BIFA, R3150)

1.15. Pulcheria:

Solidus of Pulcheria, with bust on the obverse, and Victory with tall cross on reverse.

(BIFA, LR0584b)

1.16. Helena & Fausta:

Large cameo depicting the 'Triumph of the Emperor Constantine', wherein two of the female figures may represent Fausta and Helena.

(Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, inv.GS-11096; digitised by Universiteit Leiden)

1.17. Noble Woman:

Detail of a woman, holding jewellery box, from frescoed ceiling in Trier.

(Trier, Bischöfliches Dom- und Diözesanmuseum)

1.18. Noble Woman:

Detail of a woman, holding *kantharos*, from frescoed ceiling in Trier.

(Trier, Bischöfliches Dom- und Diözesanmuseum)

1.19. Helena:

Bust of a Roman woman, sometimes identified as Helena.

(Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv.835)

1.20. Helena:

Bust of a Roman woman, sometimes identified as Helena.

(Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv.62.662)

1.21. Helena:

Seated statue of a Roman woman with the head only identified as Helena.

(Rome, Museo Capitolino, inv.496)

1.22. Helena:

Seated statue of a Roman woman, sometimes identified as Helena.

(Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, inv.171; photograph is my own)

1.23. Helena:

Statue base with inscription identifying lost statue as Helena, and with evidence for bronze statuary.

(LSA 835; digitised by the LSA project)

1.24. Ariadne:

Solidus of Ariadne, as bust on obverse, and Victory holding a wreath and *globus cruciger* on the reverse.

(*RIC X*, cat.936 (Zeno); digitised by the American Numismatics Society)

1.25. Ariadne:

Solidus of Ariadne, with the bust of Ariadne on the obverse, and a cross in wreath on the reverse.

(*RIC X*, cat.935 (Zeno); digitised by the American Numismatics Society)

1.26. Ariadne:

Reverse of the marriage solidus of Ariadne and Anastasios commemorating their union in 491, with Christ at the centre.

(*DOC I*, cat.1; photograph is my own)

1.27. Licinia Eudoxia

Marriage *solidus* of Licinia Eudoxia and Valentinian III commemorating their union in 437 on the reverse, with Theodosios II taking the central role.

(*RIC X*, cat.267 (Theodosios II); digitised by the American Numismatics Society)

1.28. Pulcheria:

Marriage *solidus* of Pulcheria and Marcian commemorating their union in 450 on the reverse, with Christ taking the central role.

(*RIC X*, cat.502 (Marcian); Connor, *Women of Byzantium*, pp.62.)

1.29a. Ariadne:

Ivory consular diptych, depicting the consul Clementius (513) with two medallions in the upper register representing Anastasios and Ariadne.

(Liverpool, World Museum, inv.M10036; photograph is my own)

1.29b. Ariadne:

Detail of ivory consular diptych, depicting the consul Clementius (513) with two medallions in the upper register representing Anastasios and Ariadne.

(Liverpool, World Museum, inv.M10036; photograph is my own)

1.30. Ariadne:

Ivory panel depicting a lone, enthroned empress.

(Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Antikensammlung, inv.X39)

1.31. Ariadne:

Ivory panel depicting a lone, standing empress.

(Florence, Bargello Museo, inv. Carrand 24)

1.32. Ariadne:

Statue head, usually identified with Ariadne.

(Paris, Musée du Louvre, Départment des Sculptures, inv. R.F.1525; digitised by the Louvre)

1.33. Amalasuntha:

Ivory consular diptych of Rufius Gennadius Probus Orestes (530), with two medallions in the upper register likely representing Amalasuntha and Athalaric.

(London, Victoria and Albert Museum, no.139-1866; digitised by the V&A)

1.34. Ariadne:

Steel-yard weight representing an empress, often stylistically dated to the fifth century. Previously identified as a range of empresses, including Ariadne.

(New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980.416a,b; digitised by the Met Collection)

1.35. Anicia Juliana:

Bust of a statue of an elite woman holding a scroll in her right hand, often stylistically dated to the fifth century. Previously identified as Anicia Juliana.

(New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 66.25; digitised by the Met Collection)

1.36. Virgin Mary:

Mosaics of the Virgin Mary in her role as Maria Regina.

(Rome, Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, mosaic arch)

1.37. Sophia:

Follis of Justin II and Sophia, represented enthroned on the obverse.

(BIFA, B1208)

1.38. Constantia:

Follis of Maurice and Constantia, represented standing on the obverse, with Theodosios on the reverse.

(BIFA, B2419)

1.39. Leontia:

Follis of Phokas and Leontia, represented standing on the obverse.

(BIFA, B2497)

1.40. Christ:

Apse mosaic depicting Christ the Redeemer, archangels, the martyr, Vitalis, and the bishop patron, Ecclesius.

(Ravenna, Basilica di San Vitale, apse; photograph is my own)

1.41. Justinian:

Imperial mosaic, depicting Justinian, soldiers, members of the clergy and elite men of the court. Likely taking part in a liturgical procession.

(Ravenna, Basilica di San Vitale, apse; photograph is my own)

1.42. Theodora:

Imperial mosaic depicting Theodora, elite women of the court and men, probably eunuchs, with courtyard scenery.

(Ravenna, Basilica di San Vitale, apse; photograph is my own)

1.43. Theodora:

View from assumed congregational space for women (on the left aisle of the church), leading to view of Theodora panel.

(Ravenna, Basilica di San Vitale; photograph is my own)

1.44. Theodora:

Ivory consular diptych of Justin (540), which depicted Christ, Justinian and Theodora in medallions in the upper register.

(Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv.6367)

1.45. Herakleios:

Solidus of Herakleios with his sons and heirs, Herakleios Constantine (the son from his first marriage, later known as Constantine III, 641) and Constantine Herakleios (a son from his second marriage, later known as Heraklonas, 641).

(BIFA, B2960)

1.46. Martina:

Siliqua of Martina and Herakleios. The female image has also been identified as Epiphania, Herakleios' daughter from his first marriage.

(BIFA, B3607)

1.47. Martina:

Follis of Martina, Herakleios, and Herakleios Constantine. The female figure on this coin has also been identified as Epiphania, Herakleios' daughter from his first marriage. The reverse of this coin is overstruck, so the date cannot be determined: Grierson gives it as 615-624.

(*DOC II.I,* cat.96; photograph is my own)

1.48. Martina:

Possible layout of the David plates, with the largest plate, the Battle of David and Goliath, taking up the central spot.

(Wander, 'The Cyprus Plates', pp.95; photo by Leo Holub, Stanford University)

1.49. Martina:

Silver plate of the marriage of David and Mihal, suggested to be Herakleios and Martina.

(Nicosia, Archaeological Museum, J452; digitisation by the Fine Arts Library, Harvard University)

1.50. Martina:

Detail of Michal on the silver plate of the marriage of David and Mihal, suggested to be Martina.

(Nicosia, Archaeological Museum, J452; digitisation by the Fine Arts Library, Harvard University)

1.51. Helena:

Medallion issued by Crispus, 324, Trier. Crispus as *caesar* on obverse; Crispus and Constantine II on reverse, with female figure between them – identified as either Fausta or Helena.

(London, British Museum, inv.1896, 0608.102; digitisation by the British Museum)

1.52. Helena:

Medallion depicting Constantinian family; the emperor and empress facing each other, with three smaller figures below and Chi-Rho in field above.

(Nantes, Musée Dobrée, inv.923.3.1; digitisation by Musée Dobrée)

1.53. Maria Regina:

Fresco displaying the enthroned Maria Regina with Christ Child, amongst other layers of decoration.

(Rome, Santa Maria Antigua; photograph courtesy of Flora Watson)

1.54. Theodora:

Column with monogram of Theodora carved into the capital, found in Hebdomon.

(Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv.1239 T; photograph is my own)

1.55. Fifth or Sixth-Century Empress:

Column with figure of a fifth or sixth-century empress carved into the capital, found in Hebdomon.

(Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv.6229 T; photograph is my own)

1.56 Theodora:

Column with monogram of Theodora carved into the capital, from Hagia Sophia.

(Istanbul, Hagia Sophia)

2. Figures of the Representations of the Middle Byzantine Empresses

2.1. Leo IV:

Nomisma of Leo IV and Constantine VI, depicted as busts, wearing *chlamys*, on the obverse. Busts of Leo III and Constantine V, wearing *loros*, on reverse.

(BIFA, B4583)

2.2. Eirene of Athens (Regency):

Nomisma of Eirene and Constantine VI, depicted as busts, wearing *chlamys* and *loros* respectively, on the obverse. Busts of Leo III, Constantine V, and Leo IV, wearing *loros*, on reverse.

(BIFA, B4599)

2.3a. Eirene of Athens (Regency):

Follis of Eirene and Constantine VI. Eirene is depicted on the obverse in *loros*, and Constantine is depicted on the reverse, in *chlamys*, above the officina mark.

(*DOC III.I*, cat.7.1; digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

2.3b. Eirene of Athens (Regency):

Nomisma of Eirene and Constantine VI. Eirene is depicted on the obverse, in *loros*, and Constantine is depicted on the reverse, in *chlamys*.

(BIFA, B4597)

2.4. Eirene of Athens:

Nomisma of Eirene, depicted as bust, wearing *loros*, on both obverse and reverse.

(BIFA, B4609)

2.5. Theodora (Regency):

Nomisma of Theodora and Michael III. Theodora is depicted on the obverse, wearing the *loros*, whereas Michael III and Thekla, wearing the *chlamys* and *loros* respectively, are on the reverse.

(BIFA, B4744)

2.6. Zoe Karbonopsina:

Follis of Zoe Karbonopsina and Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos. Both are depicted on the obverse, wearing a *loros* and *chlamys* respectively, holding the patriarchal cross between them, with the reverse bearing an inscription.

(BIFA, B4868)

2.7. Theophilos:

Single-issue *nomisma* of Theophilos. Theophilos, Theodora and Thekla are depicted on the obverse, with Anna and Anastasia on the reverse.

(*DOC III.I*, cat.407; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks, via M. Vrij)

2.8. Sixth-Century Empress:

Lead seal of an unknown Xenon, which depicts a half-length imperial couple with the Virgin Mary, holding a medallion of Christ, in between them and an inscription below.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.5394; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.9. Constantine VI:

Lead seal of Constantine VI, which depicts his bust on the obverse; he is the only figure on this seal.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.561; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.10. Eirene of Athens (Regency):

Obverse of lead seal of Anthimos (*hypatos*, *asekretis*, general *kommerkiarios*, and *archon* of the *blattion*) which depicts the busts of Eirene and Constantine on the obverse. The inscription for this seal is on the reverse, beneath the images of the male relatives of Constantine VI.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.1744; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.11a. Eirene of Athens:

Obverse of lead seal of the *kommerkiarios*, which depicts Eirene's bust on the obverse. Bottom of seal is badly damaged; thus Eirene's costume (and the latter section of the reverse inscription) is indistinct.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.2778; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.11b. Eirene of Athens:

Obverse of lead seal of Eirene, which depicts her bust, wearing *loros*. This is one of five similar examples from the Dumbarton Oaks collection.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.595; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.12. Eirene of Athens:

Manuscript illumination from the *Menologion* of Basil II, showing a tenth-century depiction of the Second Council of Nikaia, led only by Constantine VI.

(BAV, *Menologion* of Basil II, Vat.gr.1613, fol.108; digitised by the DigiVatLib)

2.13. Eirene of Athens:

Ivory panel depicting the translation of a relic, recently argued to depict the figures of Eirene and Constantine VI, dedicating the Church of St Euphemia.

(Trier Cathedral, Treasury; photograph taken by Ann Münchow)

2.14. Eudokia Ingerina:

Nomisma of Eudokia, Basil I, and Constantine. Basil is depicted on the obverse whilst Eudokia and Constantine are on the reverse.

(*DOC III.II*, cat.4; photograph is my own)

2.15. Eudokia Ingerina:

Manuscript illumination from the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, showing a portrait of Eudokia, Leo, and Alexander.

(Paris, BnF, Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus gr.510, fol.BR; digitised by BnF, Gallica)

2.16. Basil I:

Manuscript illumination from the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, showing a portrait of Basil with Elijah and Gabriel.

(Paris, BnF, Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, gr.510, fol.CV; digitised by BnF, Gallica)

2.17. Eudokia Ingerina:

Ivory panel lid of which the middle section depicts Christ blessing Basil and Eudokia.

(Rome, Palazzo Venezia; Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, photograph taken by Albert Hirmer/Irmgard Ernstmeier-Hirmer)

2.18. Theodora:

Manuscript illumination from the *Menologion* of Basil II, showing a tenth-century depiction of St Theodora.

(BAV, *Menologion* of Basil II, Vat.gr.1613, fol.249; digitised by the DigiVatLib)

2.19. Theophano Martiniake:

Manuscript illumination from the *Menologion* of Basil II, showing a tenth-century depiction of St Theophano Martiniake.

(BAV, *Menologion* of Basil II, Vat.gr.1613, fol.392; digitised by the DigiVatLib)

2.20. Saint Eudokia:

Inlaid marble icon of a Saint Eudokia, found within the complex of the Lips Monastery (Fenari Isa Mosque).

(Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv.4309; S. Gerstel, in Mathews, 'Religious Organizations', cat.8B.)

2.21. Bertha-Eudokia/Eudokia Makrembolitissa:

Ivory plaque (known as the 'Romanos Ivory') depicting Christ blessing an imperial couple, identified in the inscription as Eudokia and Romanos.

(Paris, BnF, Département des Monnaiesm Médailles et Antiques, inv.55.300; digitised by BnF)

2.22. Otto I:

Seal of Otto I, depicted as bust, wearing *chlamys*.

(Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.83)

2.23. Otto II:

Seal of Otto II, depicted as bust, wearing *chlamys*.

(Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.88)

2.24. Theophano:

Ivory plaque depicting Christ blessing Otto and Theophano.

(Paris, Musée de Cluny, Musée national du Moyen Âge, inv.Cl.392; digitised by Musée de Cluny le Monde Médiéval)

2.25a. Theophano:

Gilt book cover, with figures of Otto and Theophano, to left and right respectively, venerating Christ on the crucifix in the centre. Reused for a slightly later codex (Codex Aureus of Echternach, 1030-50).

(Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, inv. Hs.156142; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.104)

2.25b. Theophano:

Detail of gilt book cover: Theophano.

(Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, inv. Hs.156142; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.104)

2.26a. Theophano:

Lead medallion depicting Otto and Theophano, being blessed by Christ in centre, inscriptions above their heads.

(Helsinki, Tervetuloa Kansallismuseoon; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.92a)

2.26b. Theophano:

Lead medallion depicting Otto and Theophano, being blessed by Christ in centre, inscriptions to the left and right, respectively.

(Helsinki, Tervetuloa Kansallismuseoon; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.92a)

2.27a. Theophano:

North side of ciborium, depicting two female figures venerating central figure.

(Milan, Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.86b)

2.27b. Otto:

South side of ciborium, depicting two male figures venerating the central figure of St Ambrose.

(Milan, Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.86a)

2.28. Theophano:

Fresco of Otto and Theophano, now partially destroyed.

(Rieti, Abbazia San Salvatore Maggiore; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.94)

2.29a. Theodora:

Histamenon of Theodora, with Christ depicted on the obverse, and Theodora holding a *labarum* with the Virgin Mary on the reverse.

(BIFA, B5359)

2.29b. Theodora:

Tetarteron of Theodora, with the bust of Christ depicted on the obverse, and the bust of Theodora on the reverse.

(BIFA, B5360)

2.30a. Eudokia Makrembolitissa:

Histamenon of Eudokia, depicting an enthroned Christ on the obverse and Eudokia and her two sons, Michael VII Doukas and Constantine, on the reverse.

(BIFA, B5419)

2.30b. Eudokia Makrembolitissa:

Histamenon of Eudokia and Romanos IV Diogenes, depicting the imperial couple being blessed by Christ on the reverse, and her three sons, Constantine, Michael VII Doukas, and Andronikos, on the obverse.

(BIFA, B5423)

2.31. Eudokia Makrembolitissa:

Manuscript illumination of *Sacra Parallela* depicting Constantine X Doukas and Eudokia with her two sons, Michael VII Doukas and Constantine; highlighted to indicate relevant figure due to damage.

(Paris, BnF, *Sacra Parallela*, gr.922, fol.6r; digitised by BnF, Gallica)

2.32. Eudokia Makrembolitissa:

Eight-sided reliquary of St Demetrios, on one side of which Eudokia and Constantine X Doukas are depicted, being blessed by a half-figure of Christ.

(Moscow, State Historical and Cultural Museum, MZ.1148; I. Kalaverzou, in Mathews, 'Religious Organizations', cat.36.)

2.33a. Maria of Alania:

Tetarteron of Maria of Alania and Michael VII Doukas, with a bust of the Virgin Mary and medallion of Christ Child on the obverse, and the imperial couple holding the patriarchal cross between them on the reverse.

(BIFA, B5460)

2.33b. Maria of Alania:

Obverse of *miliaresion* of Maria of Alania and Nikephoros III Botaniates, with busts of the imperial couple beneath the cross.

(*DOC VI*; digitised by the American Numismatics Society)

2.34. Maria of Alania:

Manuscript illumination from the *Homilies of John Chrysostom*, showing a full-length portrait of Maria of Alania and Nikephoros III Botaniates (may originally have shown Michael VII Doukas).

(Paris, BnF, *Homilies of John Chrysostom*, Coislin 79, fol.2v; digitised by BnF, Gallica)

2.35a. Anna Dalassene:

Obverse of the lead seal of Anna Dalassene, the inscription of which describes Anna as a nun, on the obverse, and the mother of the emperor (Alexios I Komnenos) on the reverse.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1947.2.1125; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.35b. Anna Dalassene:

Reverse of the lead seal of Anna Dalassene, the inscription of which gives Anna the title of *protokouropalatissa*.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1947.2.1116; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.36. Eirene Doukaina:

Reverse of the lead seal of Eirene Doukaina, whose bust is depicted.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1955.1.4349; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.37. Eirene Doukaina:

Trachy of Alexios I Komnenos, who is depicted with on the obverse, while Eirene and John II Komnenos are on the reverse.

(BIFA, B5550)

2.38. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Reverse of *histamenon* of Zoe and Theodora, both depicted, wearing the *loros*, and holding the *labarum* between them.

(*DOC III*, cat.2; digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

2.39. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Mosaic of Zoe Porphyrogennete and Constantine IX Monomachos to the right and left of Christ, respectively.

(Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, upper gallery; photograph is my own)

2.40. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Manuscript illumination of *Homilies of St John Chrysostom*, depicting Zoe, Theodora, and Constantine IX Monomachos.

(Mount Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, *Homilies of St John Chrysostom*, Sinait.gr.364 fol.3r; Spatharakis, *Illuminated Portraits*, fig.66)

2.41. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

The 'Monomachos Crown' featuring the images of Constantine IX Monomachos (central panel), Zoe (left-hand panel) and Theodora (right-hand panel); the back four panels consist of dancing girls and allegorical figures.

(Hungary, Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, inv.99/1860; digitised by Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum)

2.42a. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Manuscript illumination from 'Madrid Skylitzes' with scene depicting Zoe's wedding to Michael IV the Paphlagonian.

(Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Synopsis of Histories*, MS Graecus Vitr.26-2 fol.206v, bottom; digitized by Biblioteca Digital Hispánica)

2.42b. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Manuscript illumination from 'Madrid Skylitzes' with scene depicting the forceful tonsuring of Zoe's sister, Theodora.

(Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Synopsis of Histories*, MS Graecus Vitr.26-2 fol.204r, bottom; digitized by Biblioteca Digital Hispánica)

2.42c. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Manuscript illumination from 'Madrid Skylitzes' with scene depicting Zoe ordering the eunuch Sgouritzes to poison John Orphanotrophos, the eunuch brother of Michael IV the Paphlagonian.

(Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Synopsis of Histories*, MS Graecus Vitr.26-2 fol.212r, top; digitized by Biblioteca Digital Hispánica)

2.42d. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Manuscript illumination from 'Madrid Skylitzes' with scene depicting Zoe's attempts to calm the mob.

(Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Synopsis of Histories*, MS Graecus Vitr.26-2 fol.220v, bottom; digitized by Biblioteca Digital Hispánica)

2.42e. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Manuscript illumination from 'Madrid Skylitzes' with scene depicting Zoe and Maria Sklerina in the 'royal box'.

(Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Synopsis of Histories*, MS Graecus Vitr.26-2 fol.227v; digitized by Biblioteca Digital Hispánica)

2.43. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Enamel disc of the bust of Zoe.

(Venice, Basilica Cattedrale Patriarcale di San Marco, Treasury, inv.N.93-108; photograph courtesy of William Watson)

2.44. Michael VII Doukas:

The Holy Crown of Hungary, focused on the three panels of Michael VII Doukas, Constantine Doukas and Geza I of Hungary.

(Budapest, Országház; Maguire, 'Images of the Court', p.187)

2.45. Maria of Antioch:

Manuscript illumination from *Council Acts of 1166*, depicting the imperial portrait of Maria and Manuel I Komnenos.

(BAV, *Council Acts of 1166*, Vat.gr.1176, fol.2r; digitised by DigiVatLib)

2.46. Agnes-Anna of France:

Folio of illuminated manuscript, *Epithalamium*, depicting the journey of a foreign-born princess sent to Constantinople for marriage.

(BAV, *Epithalamium*, Vat.gr.1851, fol.; digitised by DigiVatLib)

2.47. Piroška-Eirene of Hungary:

Mosaic of Piroška-Eirene and John II Komnenos offering gifts to the Virgin Mary and Christ Child between them – their son is portrayed to the right-hand side.

(Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, upper gallery; photograph is my own)

2.48. Piroška-Eirene of Hungary:

Reverse of the lead seal of Piroška-Eirene, depicted in full-length.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.43; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.49. Piroška-Eirene of Hungary:

Enamel plaque, possibly depicting Piroška-Eirene.

(Venice, Basilica Cattedrale Patriarcale di San Marco, Pala d'Oro; digitised by Scala Archives, Florence)

2.50. Piroška-Eirene of Hungary:

Folio of illuminated manuscript, *Gospels of John II Komnenos*, depicting an imperial couple with their son, with Christ and angels above.

(BAV, *Gospels of John II Komnenos*, Barb.gr.372, fol.5r; digitised by DigiVatLib)

2.51. Allegorical Figures:

Folio of illuminated manuscript, depicting John II Komnenos and Alexios being crowned by Christ, who has allegorical figures on either side.

(BAV, Urb.gr.2, fol.19v; digitised by DigiVatLib)

2.52a. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Enamel medallion on right panel of Khakhuli Triptych, depicting two empresses blessed by Virgin Mary, who stands between them.

(Tbilisi, Georgian National Museum; Kotsis, 'Mothers of the Empire', p.6, fig.1)

2.52b. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Enamel medallion on left panel of Khakhuli Triptych, depicting an empress greeting John the Baptist.

(Tbilisi, Georgian National Museum; Kotsis, 'Mothers of the Empire', p.8, fig.3)

2.52c. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Enamel medallion on left panel of Khakhuli Triptych, depicting an empress greeting an angel.

(Tbilisi, Georgian National Museum; Kotsis, 'Mothers of the Empire', p.7, fig.2)

3. Figures of the Representations of Late Byzantine Empresses

3.1. St. Theodora of Arta:

Sarcophagus panel of Theodora Petraliphaina with Nikephoros I Komnenos Doukas.

(Arta, Church of Hagia Theodora; Brooks, 'Sculpture and the Late Byzantine Tomb', p.98.)

3.2. Eirene Komnene Doukaina:

Fresco of the Archangel Gabriel with donors Michael Asen and Eirene Komnene Doukaina of Bulgaria.

(Kastoria, Agii Taxiarches Mitropoleos; Drakopoulou, 'Kastoria: Art, Patronage, and Society', p.123.)

3.3. Theodora Megale Komnene of Trebizond:

Trapezuntine *asper* obverse and reverse, 1284-5.

(BIFA, ET.0118)

3.4. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina:

Reverse of Seal A only; full-length image of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.1701; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.5. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina:

Reverse of Seal B only; full-length image of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1947.2.370; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.6. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina:

Reverse of Seal C only; full-length image of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.641; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.7. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina:

Seal D; obverse, Virgin Mary and Christ Child on *thokos*. Reverse, full-length image of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.

(BIFA, SL0165)

3.8. Yolande-Eirene of Montferrat:

Reverse of seal only; full-length image of Yolande-Eirene.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.1704, digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.9. Thomais Komnene Doukaina Laskarina Kantakouzene Palaiologina:

Miniature of Thomais and her husband, John Synadenos, with Virgin Mary and Christ Child above, from the illuminated manuscript of the *Bebaia Elpis typikon*.

(Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lincoln College gr. 35, f.2r)

3.10. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina:

Illustrated copy of a possible mosaic in Constantinople depicting Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, Michael VIII Palaiologos and their son, Constantine.

(Du Cange, 233; digitised by the University of Mannheim, Baden-Württemberg)

3.11. Jelena of Anjou, Queen of Serbia:

An icon of St Peter and Paul in the top register, Jelena blessed centrally, and Dragutin and Milutin in the bottom corners.

(Vatican Treasury; B. Ratliff, in Talbot 'Revival and Decline', cat.23.)

3.12. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina:

Manuscript leaf of a thirteenth-century gospel containing a canon table with the monogram of a female member of the Palaiologan family.

(BAV, Vat.gr.1158 fol.5r; digitised by DigiVatLib)

3.13. Anna of Savoy:

Obverse of *hyperpyron* of Anna of Savoy and John V Palaiologos.

(BIFA, 2000.0613.01)

3.14. Anna of Savoy:

Reverse of seal only; full-length image of Anna of Savoy.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.639; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.15. Anna of Savoy:

Miniature of Anna of Savoy, cut out of original manuscript.

(Stuttgart, Codex Hist. 20, fol.601; digitised by Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart)

3.16. Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina:

Reliquary icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ child, with Maria Angelina and Thomas Preljubović as kneeling donors.

(Meteora, Monastery of Transfiguration; L. Deriziotis, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', cat.24B.)

3.17. Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina:

Cuenca Diptych containing an icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child, venerated by Maria Angelina, in the left-hand panel, and an icon of Christ, venerated by the now-destroyed Thomas Preljubović, in the right-hand panel.

(Cuenca, Diocesan Museum; A. Weyl Carr, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', cat.24C.)

3.18. Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina:

Icon of the Doubting Thomas, with possible depiction of Maria Angelina to left of Christ.

(Meteora, Monastery of Transfiguration; L. Deriziotis, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', cat.24A.)

3.19. Virgin Mary:

Sixteenth-century fresco of the Doubting Thomas scene, with the Virgin Mary as Maria Regina.

(Meteora, Barlaam Monastery; Gargova, 'The Meteora Icon', p.378)

3.20. Virgin Mary:

Sixteenth-century fresco of the Doubting Thomas scene, with the Virgin Mary as Maria Regina.

(Zavorda, Hosios Nikanoras Monastery; Gargova, 'The Meteora Icon', p.380)

3.21. Icon of Akropolites:

Icon of the Virgin Mary Hodegetria, with silver repoussè revetment which depicted the patrons Maria and Constantine Akropolites.

(Moscow, Tretyakov Gallery; E. Gladysheva, in Talbot 'Revival and Decline', cat.4.)

3.22a. Helena Dragaš:

Manuscript frontispiece illumination depicting Helena Dragaš, Manuel II Palaiologos, and their children, John VII Palaiologos, Theodore, and Andronikos, blessed by the Virgin Mary and Christ Child.

(Paris, Musée du Louvre, MS. Ivoires A53)

3.22b. Helena Dragaš:

Close up on detail of Manuel II Palaiologos' *sakkos*, from manuscript frontispiece illumination.

(Paris, Musée du Louvre, MS. Ivoires A53)

3.23a. Helena Dragaš:

Ivory pyxis, with a focus on second imperial family, particularly the empress which may have been Helena Dragaš, and the beginning of the procession.

(Dumbarton Oaks Museum Collection, BZ.1936.24; photograph courtesy of Flavia Vanni)

3.23b. Helena Dragaš:

Ivory pyxis, depicting the first imperial family, with the start of the donation procession.

(Dumbarton Oaks Museum Collection, BZ.1936.24; photograph courtesy of Flavia Vanni)

3.23c. Helena Dragaš:

Ivory pyxis, depicting the positioning of the two imperial families.

(Dumbarton Oaks Museum Collection, BZ.1936.24; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.24. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina

Line drawing of badly-damaged donor fresco in the exonarthex of the church. The original depicts Theodora, Andronikos II, Michael VIII, the Virgin Mary, and two anonymous figures, one of whom is significantly smaller (from the viewer's left to right).

(Albania, Apollonia, Church of St Mary; Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, p.104, fig.2.4b)

3.25. Theodora

Icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, which depicts Empress Theodora and Michael III in the top register among other iconodules, with the icon of the Hodegetria within.

(London, British Museum, inv.1988,0411.1; digitised by the British Museum)

Table List

Table 1. Distribution of Base Metal Coin Types of Helena throughout the Empire, 320s. Page 63.

Table 2. Distribution of Evidence Focused on Statuary of Helena. Page 82.

Table 3. Distribution of Evidence Focused on Statuary of the Late Antique Period. Page 83.

Table 4. Distribution of Numismatic Types of all Denominations Minted in Name of Empresses, Eastern and Western Roman Empire, 383-491. Page 161.

Contents

Introduction 1
What is an 'Empress'? 8
Current Literature 13
Methodology 19
Approaches to the Material 25
Numismatic Evidence 26
Statuary 31
Wall Decorations 34
Sigillography 35
Carved and Enamel Images 36
Miniatures 38
Textual Representations 39
Terminology and Categorisation 42

Chapter One: Flavia Iulia Helena 48
1.1 Numismatic Evidence 53
1.1.1 The Early Coinage of Helena 55
1.1.2 The Case of Galeria Valeria 56
1.1.3 The Coins of Helena and Fausta 60
1.1.4 Posthumous Coins 64
1.1.5 Medallions 69
1.1.6 Numismatic Titles 72
1.2 Cameos 74
1.3 Frescoes 77
1.4 Statuary 79
1.5 Statue Bases 81
1.6 Literary Representations: Patriographical and Processional 86
1.6.1 Processions 94
Conclusion 100
Chapter Two: Aelia Ariadne 102
2.1 Numismatic Evidence 105
2.1.1 Commemorative Issues 107
2.2 Carved Representations: Ivory Diptychs and Panels 111
2.2.1 Consular Diptychs 111
2.2.2 The Anonymous Ivory Panels 116

2.3 Statuary 120
2.4 Steel-Yard Weights 123
2.5 Literary Representations 125
2.5.1 Mosaics and the Virgin Mary 127
Conclusion 130
Chapter Three: Theodora 133
3.1 Mosaics 137
3.1.1 Scholarship on San Vitale Mosaics 138
3.1.2 Mosaic Positioning 141
3.2 Carved Representations: Ivory and Epigraphy 144
3.2.1 Consular Diptychs 144
3.2.2 Monograms 147
3.2.3 Epigraphy 150
3.3 Literary Evidence: Patronage and *Ekphrasis* 154
3.3.1 Statuary 158
3.4 Numismatic Evidence 160
3.4.1 Previous Coinage 160
3.4.2 Lack of Numismatic 'Competition'? 164
3.4.3 Comparative Coinage in the Sixth Century 167
Conclusion 169
Chapter Four: Martina 170
4.1 Numismatic Evidence 172
4.2 Silver Plates 178
4.3 Literary Evidence 181
Conclusion 185
Summary of the Representations of Early Empresses 187

Chapter Five: Eirene of Athens 193
5.1 Numismatic Evidence 195
5.1.1 Coins of the Seventh and Eighth Centuries 196
5.1.2 Imperial Regalia 199
5.2 Sigillographic Evidence 203
5.3 The Trier Ivory 206
5.4 Textual Representations 210
5.4.1 Statuary 210
5.4.2 Patronage 212
5.4.3 Omission of Eirene? 215

Conclusion 219
Chapter Six: Eudokia Ingerina 220
6.1 Source Problems 222
6.2 Numismatic Evidence 224
6.3 Miniatures 227
6.4 The Palazzo Casket Ivory 230
6.5 Literary Evidence 233
6.5.1 The Kainourgion Mosaic 234
Conclusion 237
Chapter Seven: Theophano 239
7.1 Exogamic Practices 243
7.2 Competition and Influence 245
7.3 Carved Images 246
7.3.1 The Cluny Ivory 247
7.3.2 Codex Aureus of Echternach 249
7.4 Medallions 250
7.5 Wall Decorations 251
7.6 Literary Representations 253
7.6.1 Patronage 256
Conclusion 259
Chapter Eight: Zoe Porphyrogennete 260
8.1 Numismatic Imagery 264
8.1.1 The Virgin Mary on Coinage 265
8.1.2 Christ Antiphonetes 267
8.2 Wall Decoration 268
8.3 Enamels 272
8.3.1 A Venetian Disc 274
8.3.2 The Khakhuli Triptych 276
8.4 Miniatures 279
8.4.1 Madrid Skylitzes Manuscript 280
Conclusion 282
Chapter Nine: Piroška-Eirene 283
9.1 Sigillography 288
9.2 Wall Decoration 289
9.3 Enamel 294
Conclusion 302
Summary of the Representations of Middle Byzantine Empresses 303

Chapter Ten: Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina 306
10.1 Sigillography 310
10.1.1 Family Names 311
10.2 Ecclesiastical Imagery 313
10.2.1 A Lost Mosaic? 314
10.3 Records of Representation: Figural and Textual 317
10.3.1 Patronage and *Typika* 318
10.3.2 Competitive Agency: Outside the Empire 324
10.3.3 Competitive Agency: Inside the Empire 326
10.3.4 Literary Representations 330
10.3.5 A Literary Patron? 332
Conclusion 334
Chapter Eleven: Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina 336
11.1 Nomenclature: Titles and Names 339
11.1.1. Family Names 341
11.2 Miniature Representation: Icons and Innovations 343
11.2.1 Cuenca Diptych 343
11.2.2 Reliquary Icon 344
11.2.3 Icon of Doubting Thomas 345
Conclusion 352
Chapter Twelve: Helena Dragaš 353
12.1 Miniatures 356
12.1.1 Idealisations and Innovations 358
12.1.2 Nomenclature 361
12.1.3 Purpose 362
12.2 Ivories 365
12.3 Patronage 369
Conclusion 370
Summary of the Representations of Late Byzantine Empresses 372

Conclusions 374

Bibliography 501
Primary Sources 501
Secondary Sources 518

Introduction

There has probably never been a time when the relationship between women and power has been more discussed than today, or these discussions more important.[1] The recognition that there is and always has been a problematic view on this relationship, studying the past to cultivate a comparative framework from which we can draw and learn, and appreciating the experiences of women from past cultures are just a few of the reasons why we should look backward before we can look forwards. The Byzantine Empire is one such culture wherein the role of certain women, specifically the empress, was not only important and visible – when historically so many were silent and invisible – but necessary as a part of the hierarchical structure for most of the empire's existence. The role of the empress, the *augusta*, as a distinct office was formulated over a long period going back to the first days of Imperial Rome, and was subject to change, traditions, and continuities, just as any political office and powerful role was and is, and thus lends itself well to comprehensive study.

The imperial court in Constantinople was nominally divided on gender lines, with the smaller, female part designated as the *gynaikonitis*, populated with elite women who held titles such as *zoste patrikia* and *sebastokratorissa*.[2] The *augusta*, the head of this court, had assigned roles during ceremonial

[1] A key example of this, specifically in reference to women from much earlier periods, is M. Beard, *Women and Power: A Manifesto* (Cambridge, 2017). Beard specifically addresses the silencing of women – especially in public spaces – representations, and misogyny, relating the experiences of those in Antiquity to those of the present day, key among them the recent non-election of Hilary Clinton and her own experiences with social media.

[2] Γυναικωνιτις, the 'women's apartments'; in Antiquity, *Gynaikeion* referred to the secluded living quarters of women, though later use tends to refer to the space within the imperial palace. The *zoste patrikia* was a female-only role for those of the elite, used in the Middle Byzantine period, whereas the *sebastokratorissa* seems to have been used to designate the wife of the *sebastokrator*, which was in use from the Komnenian period onwards.

obligations, which were numerous throughout the year.[3] Specific ceremonies for the empress underline the significance of appropriate regalia, ceremonial positioning, and iconography for the elevation of women to the position of *augusta*.[4] The importance of the empress' ceremonial role can be seen in a letter of Patriarch Nikolaos written to Pope Sergius III; for the recognition of his marriage to his fourth wife, Zoe Karbonopsina, Leo VI was described as insisting that the office of the empress was vital to the proper functioning of the imperial court.[5] The prestige and reputation of Byzantine imperial women was also noted by their contemporaries. In the tenth century Liutprand of Cremona, for example, was sent on an embassy to Constantinople by Otto I, the Holy Roman emperor, to negotiate for a *porphyrogennete* bride – a woman 'born in the purple'; born when their father was emperor and their mother gave birth in the porphyry room in the Great Palace.[6] They were seen as a sought-after prize, as well as a vehicle for legitimacy. The amount of money, lands, and cultural capital which could be controlled and possessed by empresses is also evident in the *typika* of the monasteries that they patronised, the churches they built, the

[3] Their roles in ceremonies were laid out in great detail, alongside the emperor's, throughout the *Book of Ceremonies (BOC)*: Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, Ἐκθεσις τῆς βασιλείου τάξεως, ed. J. J. Reiske, CSHB 16-17 (Bonn, 1829-30), trans. A. Moffatt & M. Tall (eds.), *The Book of Ceremonies, Volumes One and Two,* BA 18 (Canberra, 2012).

[4] *BOC I*, R204-7 accounted for the coronation of an *augusta*, and *BOC I*, R207-14 discussed the formula for the nuptial crowning of an *augusta*. *BOC I,* R389-93 laid out the proper procedure for the hiring of the empresses' staff.

[5] Nikolaos I Mystikos, *Letters*, ed. trans. R. J. H. Jenkins & L. G. Westerink, *Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters. Greek Text and English Translation*, CFHB 6; DOT 2 (Washington D.C., 1973): Mystikos, 32, pp.219-21. Granted, the patriarch was writing to the pope to defend his support of Leo VI's uncanonical fourth marriage. Leo needed an empress because his previous three wives had died and his new partner, Zoe, had given birth to his only son, the future Constantine VII. Thus, while their marriage and the legitimacy of his heir was of utmost importance to him here, that Leo's argument was viable is also clear, owing to its success.

[6] Liutprand of Cremona, *Embassy*, ed. P. Chiesa, *Liudprandi Cremonensis Opera Omnia,* CCCM 156 (Turnhout, 1998), trans. P. Squatriti (ed.), *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona,* MTT (Washington D.C., 2007), pp.238-84: *Embassy*, pp.243, 248-9. This was not the first time that the hand of an imperial women had been sought, but this century was a turning point in exogamic marriages being accepted and enacted by the Byzantine imperial court – see Chapter Seven: Theophano (7.1), for further discussion on this point.

relics translated, and ateliers supported; unlike others in the medieval period, Byzantine women were able to own property, inherit, and even to quibble with the rulings on wills through legal processes.[7]

What can certainly be said about Byzantine empresses is that the office that they held was one with the potential to wield considerable power. However, scholarship from the modern period has often given the credit for this to the domineering personalities of certain women and weak-willed men.[8] As this thesis will demonstrate, however, empresses could be centres of power under their own aegis, as well as their husbands' and sons'. The examples may speak for themselves: they were able to rule on their own behalf in Constantinople – Eirene of Athens, Theodora Porphyrogennete – or outside of it – Yolande-Eirene of Montferrat, Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina – and to instigate rebellions and usurpations, or at least reported to be involved in these machinations – Anna of Savoy, Anna Komnene, the aspirational *augusta* – the powerful heads of houses, who were in charge when the emperor was indisposed – Sophia, Anna Dalassene – regents for infants or unable emperors – Pulcheria, Sophia, Zoe Karbonopsina, Eudokia Makrembolitissa, Anna of Savoy – the conveyors of legitimacy with options to choose – Ariadne, Zoe Porphyrogennete – and as figures of great piety – Helena, Pulcheria, Theodora of Arta.

---

[7] A. Laiou, 'The Role of Women in Byzantine Society', *JÖB* 31.1 (1981), pp.233-60; N. Oikonomidès, 'The Contents of the Byzantine House from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century', *DOP* 44 (1990), pp.205-14, pp.205-6. For examples of *typika*, the patron's guidelines for the day-to-day running of the monastery, as well as instructions on economic support, see the chapter on Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina for further explanation.

[8] A recent example of this type of scholarship can found in J. A. Evans, *The Empress Theodora: Partner of Justinian* (Austin, TX, 2003), pp.114-7: Evans concluded that 'powerful women and weak emperors went together' when considering the influence and public role of a number of Late Antique empresses.

Yet, what is of most importance to this study, in understanding this relationship, is the prevalence of the images of empresses; they are found within all twelve centuries of the Byzantine Empire and largely span audiences of all levels of societies. The same cannot be consistently said of comparative cultures. In medieval Western Europe, for instance, there were no coins minted with the images and names of live women until the twelfth century, whereas numismatic portraits of Byzantine empresses, though not constant, persisted from the beginning of the empire until its last centuries.[9] Additionally, while portraiture of specific empresses from the previous years of Imperial Rome may have survived in a greater number, there are issues with Roman female imagery, particularly statuary: the elision of empresses with goddesses and the purposeful stylistic similarities between noblewomen and empresses, for instance, can be problematic to art historical study of this period.[10]

The use and perception of imperial female images during this timeframe is fertile ground for study, especially as images from the antique and medieval world were not neutral, but conveyed messages with specific purposes in mind. It is likely that Byzantine audiences were used to interpreting and reading images; as Maguire noted, even the associative Greek was itself ambiguous – γραφή was used for writing or painting, ἱστορία for textual history or image, and σχήμα was both a rhetorical device and artisanal pose – thus encouraging this type of 'reading'.[11] Often quoted in this regard is Gregory of Nyssa's explanation – referring here to church paintings – that art 'even if it is silent, is capable of

[9] A. M. Stahl, 'Coinage', in M. Schaus (ed.), *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopaedia* (New York, NY, & Abingdon, 2006), pp.154-5.
[10] Jane Fejfer, for instance, argues that the features of imperial and elite portraiture are often so similar, and intentionally so, that they must be studied together: J. Fejfer, *Roman Portraits in Context* (Berlin, 2008), p.331.
[11] H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ, 1981), p.9.

speaking from the wall and being of the greatest benefit'.[12] Byzantium is thus the ideal site for this study due to the large and diverse scope of the materials, over a broad period, which lends itself well to comparative work.

Historically, female behaviour has not always been noted fairly or accurately, particularly those acting within a public space. After the application of critical theory, such as the linguistic turn, to our reading of women within the literary record of Byzantium, it can be seen that expressions of gender were often used as a rhetorical tool.[13] Women were often portrayed in certain ways to make a point about the problems of this period, habitually by inverting expected gender norms. For instance, a common trope was the portrayal of the emperor as incapable of ruling the empire competently, and subsequently being rescued by a woman, who, it was then implied, actually had no right being in the centre of a public space; the female figure is thus used as a vehicle to critique the male figure.[14] This can be seen as being played out by Theodora and her rousing speech in which she refused to abdicate and escape from the dangers of the encroaching Nika Riot;[15] by Sophia, who acted as regent for her husband during his mental incapacities, delaying the military ambition of the Sasanids by pleading her defencelessness as a woman;[16] and by the critique or

---

[12] On describing the decoration of the Church of St Theodore the Martyr: Gregory of Nyssa, *Laudatio S. Theodori*, ed. J. P. Migne, *PG* 46, (Paris, 1863), 737, trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), pp.36-7, and quoted in Maguire, *Art and Eloquence*, p.9.

[13] E. Clark, 'The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the 'Linguistic Turn'', *Church History* 67 (1998), pp.1-31.

[14] For discussion, see L. Brubaker, 'The Age of Justinian: Gender and Society', in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005), pp.427-47.

[15] Prokopios of Caesarea, Ὑπὲρ τῶν Πολέμων Λόγοι, ed. J. Haury, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia* (Leipzig, 1905), trans. H. B. Dewing, *History of the Wars, Volume 1: Books 1-2,* Loeb 48 (Cambridge, MA, 1914): *Wars*, I. xxiv. pp.231-33. See Brubaker, 'Age of Justinian', pp.429-30.

[16] Evagrios Scholastikos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία, ed. J. Bidez & L. Parmentier (London, 1898), trans. M. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, TTH 33 (Liverpool, 2000): Evagrios, V. 12. See L. James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London, 2001), p.69.

omission of Martina within texts due to her incestuous marriage with her uncle.[17] Caution must thus be used when relying on texts for information about this period, particularly when looking to gain any understanding of the potential roles of women. Additionally, this was an era of low literacy rates. It was nominally images, not reams of text, that most of the population was surrounded by, particularly in palatial and ecclesiastical settings, but also in mundane and day-to-day settings.[18] Although there are issues with textual sources, it should also be noted that some of the imagery that will be discussed within this thesis was viewed only by a small audience – manuscript miniatures, for instance – whereas some of the texts would have been heard or read by relatively large audiences.[19] To this end, though I will be focusing on images, I will be using text as a supplement, to attempt to overcome the limitations of these different approaches.

The overarching aim of this thesis is to identify how Byzantine empresses were represented, leading to insight on how their relationship with power was expressed, audience expectations and gendered expectations, and whether – and how – this changed and continued over time. Though other works of similar topics have addressed these issues thematically to do this, I will broach the subject through a chronological synthesis of the physical representations of empresses, with one key case study per century, beginning in the fourth and ending in the fifteenth century. There are four predominant thematic categories

[17] James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.19, 74. See the case study on Martina for further discussion on the issues with source material.
[18] Estimates in terms of literary rates run from 1% to 5% of the population: M. Mullett, 'Writing in Early Mediaeval Byzantium', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.156-85, provides a succinct overview.
[19] There was a 'multi-mediality' of literature, and much has been discussed on texts' orality, especially by proponents like M. Mullett. For more information on this subject, see T. Shawcross & I. Toth (eds.), *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond* (Cambridge, 2018).

that form the basis of this thesis which will be explored throughout: portraiture, positioning, piety, and patronage. Portraiture – the physical representation of the imperial woman – in its various media will be explored in more detail, but it should be noted first and foremost that this study is interested in the contexts of the portraiture as well as the potential reception, whilst keeping in mind that these are idealised images, not individualised portraiture as might be understood by art historians. Positioning can refer to the location either of the image within its context or the position of the portrait of the empress within the depiction; or it may refer to the position within the political hierarchy or within her own family, and so includes discussions of lineage and how that is represented and signified. As argued by James, public expressions of piety were one clear route to power; it is a 'springboard into power' and so exploring this theme is of key importance.[20] Patronage is one of the only consistent ways within the historical record where we can see imperial women taking an active, public role and interest, though the reception of this activity will also be a key focus. This thesis will endeavour to see these expressions of patronage as political and visible actions, rather than simply as 'cultural patronage', which can then devolve into discussion of activities within the private sphere.[21] It should be noted that these four themes will overlap throughout – for example, patronage by imperial women often takes the form of funding churches and monasteries, and so can overlap into discussions of pious actions.

[20] James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.14-5.
[21] This was pointed out by James (James, *Empresses and Power,* p.149) and taken on board in the work of later scholars, such as Unterweger's work on the wide-spread patronage of Theodora: U. Unterweger, 'The Image of the Empress Theodora as Patron', in L. Theis, M. Mullett, & M. Grünbart, with G. Fingarova & M. Savage (eds.), *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond* (Vienna, 2014), pp.97-108, p.98.

Through a careful examination of the material, from the fourth to fifteenth centuries, the specific case studies of empresses feature the following: Helena, Aelia Ariadne, Theodora, Martina, Eirene of Athens, Eudokia Ingerina, Theophano, Zoe Porphyrogennete, Piroška-Eirene of Hungary, Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina, and Helena Dragaš. These case studies were then split into three groups; Early, Middle, and Late Byzantium (fourth-seventh, eighth-twelfth, and thirteenth-fifteenth centuries respectively), which fit together chronologically, but also make sense thematically, and will be summarised at the end of each section. I have chosen to approach this topic using a wide chronological span, so that I can track changes over the entirety of the Byzantine Empire, noting where representational conventions break, continue, and develop. Whilst moden monographs on Byzantine empresses have been written, this thesis differs in its approach; as opposed to earlier works, which largely focus on specific periods within Byzantium, it examines the whole of the Byzantine period thus allowing for these changes to be traced.

What is an 'Empress'?

For the purposes of this study and selection of case studies, the label of 'Byzantine empress' will be applied to those imperial women who held the correct titles - *augusta* or *basilissa* – who were able to wield some form of political power, and who are visible within the historical record. The purpose here is to reflect on the breadth and diversity of visible female imperial power: active power in the empress' own right – through sole or conjoined rule – or, more often, soft power through influence with key figures, the right to act and

to take part in events; what Liz James labels the authority of empresses.[22] This term must therefore inevitably gravitate towards the inclusion of emperors' wives or mothers, especially regents, who exerted significant political influence, but is not given on their position in the imperial family alone. This distinction does not disqualify daughters or sisters of the emperor – could anyone convincingly argue that Pulcheria was not an empress during the reign of her brother, Theodosius II (416-450)? – but it does not automatically include those female relatives who were given imperial titles. Lupicina-Euphemia, for instance, held the title of *augusta* at the beginning of the sixth century, but with the exception of some problematic comments from Prokopios, there is little to suggest that she held a great deal of power in the reign of her husband, Justin I (518-527).[23] Thus, though title alone is not enough for inclusion in this study, it is both a good starting point and a baseline requirement for inclusion in study; titles are indicative of the status of imperial women, and that they were represented to audiences as the empress.

In the early years of the empire, *augusta* was the main title given to women in the position of imperial power in Constantinople; it was the female equivalent of the honorific which had evolved from the first Roman emperor, Augustus.[24] This was then followed by *basilissa*, first used in the eighth century by Eirene of Athens, and, more rarely, *autokratorissa* from Middle Byzantium

[22] L. James, 'Goddess, Whore, Wife or Slave? Will the Real Byzantine Empress Please Stand Up?', in A. Duggan (ed.), *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp.123-40, pp.126-17.
[23] Prokopios of Caesarea, Ἀπόκρυφη Ἱστορία, ed. J. Haury, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia,* 3 vols (Leipzig, 1905), trans. G. A. Williamson & P. Sarris (ed.), *The Secret History* (London, 1966, repr. 2007): *Anekdota,* pp.41-2. Prokopios suggests that Justinian was only able to change the law and marry Theodora after Lupicina-Euphemia died, thus indicating her influential position.
[24] E. Bensammer, 'La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification: Recherches sur les sources byzantines de la fin du VIIIe siècle à la fin du XIIe siècle', *Byz* 46 (1976), pp.243-91.

on, as the female equivalent to *autokrator*.[25] In a unique instance in the Byzantine period, the typically imperial male nomenclature of *basileus ton Romaion*, was used by an imperial women. Eirene of Athens (797-802) is known to have made use of this title, though only on a gold Sicilian type, of questionable attribution, and to sign off on legal documentation; by and large, Eirene used, and was called, *basilissa*.[26] Though *despoina* and *kyria* (largely translated as 'lady' or 'mistress') were also titles used to describe women with access to power, these can also be used to describe the wives of Byzantine elites more broadly, outside of the Constantinopolitan hierarchies of power. The wife of the despot of Morea, for instance, might be titled *despoina* and yet she would not be described as an empress of Byzantium. As Hill points out, we must also take note of where these titles are coming from: the 'official' sources of coins and seals that were produced by the central authority and thus reflect contemporary positions, or the 'unofficial' sources of chroniclers and histories, which may be outside the remit of control of imperial power, but doubtlessly did not appoint titles without consideration.[27]

Though titles are a major indicator as to the nature of a woman's status in the court of Byzantium, as will be shown in this thesis, these titles can be

[25] Leo was the first emperor to use *basileus* (the male version of the Greek title for 'emperor') on his coinage and Eirene, as the first titled empress after him, followed suit on coins produced during her reign. Prior to this, Bensammer argues that it is a dignity, rather than a title which relates to status or function: Bensammer, 'La titulaire', p.283. *Autokratorissa*, as far as I can see, was used only rarely: in images, we can see Maria of Alania, Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina and Helena Dragaš.

[26] Two new laws were issued in her sole reign which bore the title *basileus* - Herrin suggests that Eirene and her legal adivsors would have seen no reason to change the traditional formulation, which 'guaranteed authenticity': J. Herrin, *Women in Purple: Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* (London, 2001), p.100. James is critical of scholars that suggest that Eirene ruled as a 'female king' and points out that her use of this title was a comparatively rare incident: L. James, 'Men, Women, Eunuchs: Gender, Sex, and Power', in J. Haldon (ed.), *A Social History of Byzantium* (Oxford, 2009), pp.31-50, pp.43, 45-6. For the Sicilian coin, see P. Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA, 1982), p.154.

[27] B. Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium, 1025-1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology* (Harlow, 1999), pp.97-9.

transplanted and used successfully in courts outside of Constantinople. Thus, I have been able to include female figures who may not traditionally have been selected for a study on Byzantine empresses: that of Theophano and Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina. Both were biologically – and therefore arguably legitimately – related to contemporary Byzantine imperial families, and therefore used the titles of *augusta* and *basilissa* in their tenures as empress of the Holy Roman Empire and empress of Epiros respectively.

However, these parameters do lead to some issues and careful consideration needs to be taken before including or excluding female figures of authority. For example, Anna Dalassene, the mother of Alexios I Komnenos, is sometimes discussed within the historiography as an empress during her son's reign.[28] Her granddaughter, Anna Komnene, described her as an integral player in the early years of Alexios' reign, taking care of administration and domestic affairs, even ruling in his stead when he was away from the capital.[29] Yet Anna Dalassene's seals – indicators of how she represented herself in official communications – entitled her as either nun and 'mother of the emperor' (fig.2.35a) or *protokouropalatissa* (fig.2.35b), rather than *augusta* or *basilissa*.[30] Thus, despite her pivotal role in the ruling of the empire, and her access to power, this study cannot include her as an empress; she is neither titled nor visually represented in the historical record – in this case, even in her own

[28] See L. Garland, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* (London & New York, NY, 1999), pp.188-92, which includes Anna Dalassene in a chapter on Alexios' empresses, equating *despoina* with empress (though she does note that there is no evidence for Anna being crowned).
[29] Anna Komnene, Ἀλεξιάς, ed. A. Kambylis & D. Reinsch, CFHB 40/1, 2 vols (Berlin, 2001), trans. E. R. A. Sewter & P. Sarris (ed.), *The Alexiad* (London, 1969, rev. 2009): *Alexiad,* III.6-8, pp.91-5. A chrysobull, which Anna repeats apparently close to verbatim, was also promulgated by Alexios to secure his mother in her position as interim ruler.
[30] It has been argued that Anna Dalassene was well aware where the basis of her power was and thus explains her emphasis on 'mother of the emperor': Hill, *Imperial Women,* pp.81-2.

sigillography – as an empress. Thus, as this example shows, the women in question must be titled in the contemporary source material, as either *augustua*, *basilissa* or, more rarely, *autokratorissa*, as well as being visible within the Byzantine hierarchy during their tenure.[31] The selection of empress depends on the material, either extant physical imagery or textual representations, which is available for use.

There were specific criteria that had to be met during the decision-making process for each case-study. The availability of images was key among them, as well as variation: one empress may have several coin types, but it is far more telling to examine a variety of media comparatively. Context was also important, for the circumstances of the day will affect any public office and its output – the exploration of this could lead to significant reflections on the representation of the empress. Furthermore, the volume of modern literature was taken in to account; for some empresses, such as the Theodosians, much has been written, therefore it was more rewarding to explore another reign less focused on, such as Ariadne. The reasons behind each choice are detailed at the beginning of each case study.

There are, of course, limitations with this thesis. For one, it is not intersectional and in no way accounts for the lived experience and access to power of other elite women and of any female not born into wealth or an elite family. However, I would argue that empresses are the only group of women who regularly had access to cultural and social power, and their images were

[31] As will be explored in later chapters, only a few empresses were described with the title *autokratorissa*

frequently used – from widely-disseminated coins, to mosaics, to luxury portables – to promote diverse agendas: among other things, imperial ideologies. Additionally, due to the nature of this work, the focus is largely on Constantinople, the imperial capital. This is not only exclusionary on the part of those who lived outside of the capital yet within the borders of the Byzantine Empire, but it also means that those female rulers living in 'Byzantinised' peripheral areas do not come under the remit of this study. This is somewhat rectified by the inclusion of Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina, the *basilissa* of Epiros, but could certainly be expanded on for future work. Some of the earlier case studies will also reference to statues and a variety of other media in areas outside of Constantinople, which will then allow for analysis from the provinces.

Current Literature

If one thing can be said about the orientalising work of Charles Diehl on Byzantine empresses from the turn of the twentieth century, it is that it was a product of its time.[32] It placed the majority of these women at a distance from the daily political life of the imperial court, and represented them as being largely ornamental, living out their lives in their own decorative court with other elite women and eunuchs. However, over the past four decades, the study of Byzantine empresses has had new life poured into it. Kenneth Holum's work on Theodosian empresses was well received, though it too relied overmuch on the personalities of individuals, and it now seems likely that he assigned too much

[32] C. Diehl, *Figures byzantines* (Paris, 1906).

in terms of authority and influence to Pulcheria.[33] Donald Nicol's biographical survey on a seemingly arbitary selection of elite women after the Fourth Crusade can, at times, seem more concerned with relating a narrative constructed of scandalising tales of child-brides and empresses obsessed with intrigue, though it is placed within a useful, broader historical context.[34]

In the early 2000s, publications came out which primarily focused on Byzantine women and material culture. Within a year of each other, Liz James and Anne McClanan published books on early Byzantine empresses, both influential for this thesis.[35] Where McClanan focused largely on the material culture of the early period, James used both textual and physical sources to add to our understanding of the power of early empresses. James' overarching thesis that it was the office, and not the personality, of the empress which was able to undertake great authority during this early period, despite women being ideologically unable to do so, was a detailed and convincing argument.[36] As such, her work formed the basis from which this thesis has expanded upon both thematically and chronologically.

Lynda Garland, Barbara Hill, and Judith Herrin all produced works that principally focused on Middle Byzantine empresses – though Garland expanded to slightly earlier periods – which largely gave only a textual treatment of these figures, with some nods to material culture, though this is largely numismatic

---

[33] K. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkley, CA, 1982). For works that argue for overemphasis on the activities of Pulcheria, see, for example, C. Mango, 'Theotokopolis', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan, 2000), pp.17-25, who focused on the paucity of proof for her patronage.
[34] D.M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits, 1250-1400* (Cambridge, 1994).
[35] L. James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London, 2001); A. McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses: Image and Empire* (Basingstoke & New York, NY, 2002).
[36] James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.164-5.

in nature.[37] As discussed, historical texts were written with an agenda and design that are not always clear, especially to an audience removed from its immediate context; a more interdisciplinary approach might have broadened understanding for all three works. Garland takes a chronological approach, with each chapter focusing on notable empresses (leading to odd gaps in the chronology), beginning with a few examples from the early Byzantine period, the earliest of which is Theodora in the sixth century. However, the majority of the chapters are on middle Byzantine empresses, and describes their tenures – sometimes grouped together, such as 'The Wives of Leo VI' – within a broader historical context. Though Garland looked at these women through a wider historical lens, she often takes the source material at face value, taking for granted the veracity of authors such as Prokopios and Psellos, and hence can be seen to include judgement and stereotypes in the construction of her narrative.[38] Comparatively, Herrin was more selective in her case studies, and centred her work on three main female figures from the eighth and ninth centuries – Eirene, Euphrosyne, and Theodora – drawing on several different elements of their lives, but making their political position, involvement in religious controversy and their close affinity to the Virgin Mary, her main focal points. Making good use of the available sources, it can be seen as a snapshot into the treatment, position, and perception of women in power in the Byzantine Empire, both to positive and negative effect; these particular women may have had an affinity for the Virgin Mary, but it does not necessarily follow that their

[37] L. Garland, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* (London, 1999); J. Herrin, *Women in Purple: Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* (London, 2001); B. Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium, 1025-1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology* (Harlow, 1999).

[38] Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, pp.11-4 for Prokopios on Theodora and her early life of debauchery; pp.136, 138 for Zoe as 'egotistical' and her arrogance as described by Psellos, respectively.

predecessors and successive empresses were seen to be linked to the Theotokos.[39] Hill's work is also of a smaller scope than Garland's, and focuses on the eleventh and twelfth centuries, picking out key themes such as patronage, roles and titles, and ideologies as main subjects while still keeping within a broader chronological narrative. Hill also brings in women other than the emperor's wife under the umbrella term of 'imperial women' – such as Anna Komnene and Anna Dalassene – which brings a significant dimension to the potential role of women other than the 'main' empress, and also underlined apparent patterns of decline in terms of power during this period.[40] Petra Melichar recently published a monograph on imperial women in late Byzatium, impressive in both the scope of its detailed knowledge of the imperial women of this period, and how it is all is brought together thematically in the latter half of the book to explore the roles and activities enacted by them.[41]

Carolyn Connor and Ioli Kalavrezou's publications looked more broadly at what could be known about the lives of Byzantine women.[42] Whereas Connor's work largely focused on the textual evidence, Kalavrezou's volume took the form of a catalogue, focusing on what the material culture within the historical record could suggest about the lives of all Byzantine women, with one section looking towards the access to power for women. The problems facing scholars when attempting to understand the lives of ordinary Byzantines, especially women, has certainly been highlighted within these studies. This problem was

[39] As will be seen in the first chapter, only Helena in her role as empress was actively compared to the Virgin Mary, though Pulcheria and Verina actively venerated her through patronage and other public acts.
[40] Hill, *Imperial Women*, pp.181-98, for Anna Komnene, and throughout for Anna Dalassene but especially, pp.72-83.
[41] P. Melichar, *Empresses of Late Byzantium: Foreign Brides, Mediators and Pious Women* (Berlin, 2019).
[42] C. L. Connor, *Women of Byzantium* (New Haven, CT, 2004); I. Kalavrezou (ed.), *Byzantine Women and their World* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).

the crux of Mati Meyer's later, behemoth work; she developed an overarching but cohesive synthesis of depictions of non-elite women from visual materials across the period.[43] Yet these non-elite women are largely represented in images of biblical scenes and there are limitations as to how much can be gleaned in these religious contexts about *realia* because they are part of a specific narrative: the scenes tend to follow a dogmatic structure and so the material does not represent the everyday woman in Byzantium. Some works take a different tack and focus on how scholarship might view 'imperial women' beyond their titles, reimagining them as the partners, official or otherwise, of the emperors and looking at romantic love.[44]

Most other scholarly treatments look at individual empresses, such as Jan Drijvers, Averil Cameron, and Alice-Mary Talbot,[45] or take a specific thematic feature as their impetus, such as early or middle Byzantine empresses on coins,[46] or the varied patronage of elite women.[47] These works undeniably have their place within scholarship and add a great amount of detail to our

[43] M. Meyer, *An Obscure Portrait: Imaging Women's Reality in Byzantine Art* (London, 2009).
[44] K. Nikolaou, 'Empresses and *Augustae* as Wives, Paramours and Mistresses (5th-11th centuries)', *BSl* 75 (2017), pp.43-54. There are some issues with this article, which largely takes the source material at face value, not the least of which is the interpretation of the death of the saint and empress, Theophano, which was apparently caused by the infidelity of Leo VI.
[45] Av. Cameron, 'The Empress Sophia', *Byz* 45 (1975), pp.5-21; J. W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding the True Cross* (Leiden, 1992); A.-M. Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina: Wife of Michael VIII', *DOP* 46 (1992), pp.295-303. There are many works examining the lives, or specific activities of particularly notable empresses, such as Helena, Theodora of the sixth century, and Eirene of Athens, which will be dealt with in their own case studies.
[46] L. Brubaker & H. Tobler, 'The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)', *Gender & History* 12.3 (2000), pp.572-94; L. James, 'Displaying Identity and Power? The Coins of Byzantine Empresses between 804 and 1204' in S. Solway (ed.), *Medieval Coins and Seals: Constructing Identity, Signifying Power* (Turnhout, 2015), pp.189-210.
[47] L. Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena: Patterns in Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries', in L. James (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs* (London & New York, NY, 1997), pp.52-75; L. Theis, M. Mullett, & M. Grünbart with G. Fingarova & M. Savage (eds.), *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond* (Vienna, 2014); M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019).

understanding of the roles and perception of women, but can lead to an inchoate and disjointed view. What is not yet available is a cohesive approach to the range of roles and representations, public and private activities, and analysis of their perception, of Byzantine empresses, highlighting the thematic continuations, innovations, and turning-points over the whole of the Byzantine Empire. This is the gap that this thesis is intended to fill.

As is true for many thematic approaches in the field of Byzantine studies, more has been published on comparable works for the period of Imperial Rome. Short chronological works have been compiled on Roman empresses, women in general, and gendered analysis over the whole period. Diana Kleiner and Susan Matheson edited an excellent volume on representations of imperial Roman women, clearly linking in to the broader historical context; Susan Wood selected critical periods of change to examine with an art historical focus; and Jane Frijer compiled an astonishing array of portraiture over the whole period with a focus on statuary, as well as the context in which it was found.[48] Ancient Greek and Hellenistic women have also been the subject of many works and have often been combined with later Roman women, due to limited material and written evidence, and also to create an interdisciplinary, comparative approach to the representations of and roles that these women occupied.[49]

The Medieval West is also a well-studied area for the topic of women and power, though it could be argued that more often than not, these works limit

[48] D. E. E. Kleiner. & S. Matheson (eds.), *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (New Haven CT, 1996); S. Wood, *Imperial Women: A Study in Public Images, 40 BC-AD 68* (Leiden, 1999); J. Fejfer, *Roman Portraits in Context* (Berlin, 2008).

[49] For example, S. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (London, 1975); B. M. Fant & M. R. Lefkowitz, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook in Translation* (Bristol, 2005). Both give excellent overviews throughout a large period of time and geographical spread, with Fant & Lefkowitz organising their translations thematically to allow for greater comparisons.

themselves in becoming too niche, particularly geographically. For example, a new series in the past decade on 'Queenship and Power' is interested in exploring the varying ways in which this relationship expressed itself and was expressed.[50] As far as I am aware, however, the volumes of this series, of which there are over fifty, largely focused on geographical areas of the Medieval and Early Modern West, with some forays into areas colonised by Western European powers, thus placing artificial and potentially anachronistic limitations on themselves.[51]

Methodology

This thesis has been greatly influenced by the interdisciplinary approaches to visual culture and gender that have been exemplified in the works of Byzantine historians like Liz James and Leslie Brubaker: using images to interpret expressions of gendered relations, particularly within the context of political and social power, forms its methodological foundation. Broader methodological reading has also played an influential role. Key among these is Judith Butler's seminal *Gender Trouble*, which explored gender, alongside sex, as a social construction that is continually performed and is thus reified through that performativity.[52] Butler's work has proven fundamental in

[50] Recent publications in this series that are relevant to this thesis include P. Nash, *Empress Adelheid and Countess Matilda: Medieval Female Rulership and the Foundations of European Society* (New York, NY, 2017) and P. G. Jestice, *Imperial Ladies of the Ottonian Dynasty: Women and Rule in Tenth-Century Germany* (New York, NY, 2018).
[51] There are some minor exceptions to this rule: there are two chapters on non-Western women in E. Woodacre (ed.), *Queenship in the Mediterranean*: *Negotiating the Role of the Queen in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras* (New York, NY, 2013). The series has also recently taken interest in the present-day receptions of the relationship between medieval women and power, which also include some non-Western women: Z. E. Rohr & L. Benz (eds.), *Queenship and the Women of Westeros: Female Agency and Advice in Game of Thrones and A Song of Ice and Fire* (New York, NY, 2020).
[52] J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY, 1990).

scholarship over the past thirty years, and more recently in the field of Byzantium. Stavroula Constantinou has made great use of this as a theoretical framework for her work on Byzantine hagiography and the performative expressions of gender therein, and is also the defining approach behind much of Leonora Neville's exploration of Byzantine gender roles.[53]

Another seminal work, Joan Scott's 'Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis', emphasised the role of gender in the study of political history and the importance of its examination within this context: political history, she writes, 'has, in a sense, been enacted on a field of gender'.[54] Looking to poststructuralist theory, Scott problematized the use of the word 'gender' itself, and argued it as a non-static term that must be continually reinterpreted. She explored the gendered dynamic to historical power, noting particularly aspects of language used within political frameworks; that masculine qualities are deemed strong where feminine ones are used to represent weakness or to establish the outsider, the 'other'. This was furthered by her discussion of the exclusion of women from the tops of hierarchical structures, all of which thus reproduces and entrenches gender difference within societies.[55] This has had such an impact on gender scholarship that Scott was compelled to write a follow up article in 2010.[56] Here Scott assessed the developments in the scholarship since her initial article was published, arguing that gender, by way

[53] S. Constantinou, 'Performing Gender in Lay Saints' Lives', *BMGS* 38 (2014), pp.24-32; L. Neville, *Byzantine Gender* (Leeds, 2019), p.94: 'Gender, like much of social interaction, seems thus to have been highly performative', particularly relating to discussions of Byzantine persons as embodying the characteristics of the gender which was not their own, to either their benefit or detriment.
[54] J. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *AHR* 91.5 (1986), pp.1053-75, p.1074.
[55] Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category', p.1073.
[56] *AHR* dedicated their December 2008 issue to Scott's work and how it had impacted various fields within history: '*AHR* Forum: 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis'', *AHR* 113.5 (2008).

of interrogating difference, remains a relevant and critical method of historical analysis.[57]

This thesis makes use of and benefits from the methodological approaches of these key works by bringing together the two main strands of gender performativity and the importance of gendered relationships to and within political structures. Thus it seeks to look at representations of gendered imperial power and to explore in what spaces women were being expressed as part of the imperial hierarchy; how this was continually expressed and augmented over time, and where it was thought appropriate to do so. Though the thesis will consistently touch on the issue of the political agency of the empresses themselves, the main focus will be to explore the representations of these women; how the relationship between women and power was considered to appropriately manifest, within private and public contexts. These two strands of agency and representation are sometimes clearly brought together in discussions of competitive cultural agency, which will be seen most strongly in the cases of Theodora in the sixth century, Eirene in the eighth, Theodora Palaiologina in the thirteenth, and Maria Angelina in the fourteenth.

As visual representations are the key evidentiary base for this thesis, an appropriate approach to imperial imagery must also be discussed. Portraiture is largely created for a reason, especially imperial portraiture, as the identity of rulers is inevitably tied into their representations. It has been convincingly theorised by Kantorowicz that rulers possessed two bodies, their own private body, and the one belonging to the state over which they ruled.[58] Thus, as

[57] J. Scott, 'Gender: Still A Useful Category of Analysis?', *Diogenes* 225.7 (2010), pp.7-14.
[58] E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theory* (Princeton, NJ, 1957), which considers public and private imperial male bodies.

Brilliant argued, imperial portrayal moves from the 'physical body to the metaphysical king [or empress]', which is public, idealised, and becomes the personification of ruling power.[59] An awareness of both the idealising nature of these images and the expectation of understanding on the part of the audience, as part of a shared cultural memory, is thus required. As has already been problematised within the field of art history, the present-day viewer should use caution when giving meaning to past imagery – the reception and audience of the image is paramount to our understanding, but we cannot assume a shared identity and must be aware of the role of the interpreter as problematic.[60] Images worked in a variety of ways in Byzantium, as Brubaker has suggested, which was altogether dependent on their contexts: images could convey messages to their audience, but what may have seemed obvious to a contemporary audience might be unimaginable to a present-day one, removed as they are.[61] Indeed, McClanan suggested that Byzantine audiences did not merely decipher finite, fixed meanings but engaged with images within the context of a range of shared associations.[62] But this must still be explored with the understanding that Byzantine portraiture was idealised; medieval 'literary and artistic conventions obfuscated [the] personal identity' of Byzantine rulers.[63] For the purposes of this thesis, Liz James's argument that it was the

[59] R. Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), pp.102-4.
[60] K.-E. Barzman, 'Beyond the Canon: Feminists, Postmodernists, and the History of Art', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52.3 (1994), pp.327-38. The significance of the audience and reception of art is emphasised, while the author's negative view of feminists' concentrations on the identifying female creators – which becomes more problematic the further into the past we go – and keeping the audience as only a passive participant is highlighted.
[61] L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Images as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999), pp.19-26.
[62] McClanan, *Representations*, p.184.
[63] For McClanan, our present-day fixation with celebrity culture confuses our understanding of medieval perceptions; rulers were not famous as individuals, it was the role they held that was notable: McClanan, *Representations*, pp.184-5.

representation of the office of the empress, rather than the individual behind the representation that mattered is pivotal; the representation was the 'body politic' of the empress to its broad audience.[64] Thus this thesis stays away from discussions of production and, though it does look at the image within its context where possible, it does not attempt to argue and identify portraiture as named empresses. Instead, it will look at the portraiture itself and attempt to understand what the audience was meant to see, what messages the representation was meant to convey, perhaps about a particular empress if possible, but more certainly about the role, the office, of a Byzantine empress.

To help achieve this, whilst being cautious of the problems of audience, an interdisciplinary methodology has been adopted; texts will be used as supplementary materials, the selection of which will be discussed in the coming section. For our understanding of ancient and medieval texts, Elizabeth Clark's work on the linguistic turn and how this affects our understanding of women in Late Antique texts has been useful; by looking at Gregory of Nyssa's writings on his own sister, Makrina, male authors were convincingly shown to be distorting the realities of female lives for their own ideological, literary purposes.[65] Anthony Kaldellis has challenged Clark's viewpoint that little of women's lives can be recovered; though the linguistic turn is important, he argues that there can be a middle ground through the careful consideration of the material, such

[64] James, *Byzantine Empresses*, pp.165-6. While James' argument of the 'office of the empress' remains convincing, I recognise that it is not consistently seen as an 'official' office, and can be a mutable role of fluctuating power within the Byzantine hierarchy, dependent on circumstance. If it is unofficial, it is still uniformly recognisable by its dress, its nomenclature, its space within ceremonial activities, as well as its tradition of access to power and safeguarding through regencies.

[65] E. Clark, 'The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the 'Linguistic Turn'', *Church History* 67.1 (1998), pp.1-31. For reading specifically on the Late Antique and Byzantine period, see E. Clark, 'Ideology, History and the Construction of 'Woman' in Late Ancient Christianity', *JECS* 2.2 (1994), pp.155-84.

as the *realia* that can be reconstructed from hagiographies.[66] There is scope for this in both texts and physical imagery, as explored in works such as Maria Parani's book on the reality of Byzantine dress, among other material elements.[67] As early as 1983, Judith Herrin was advocating for the careful examination of incidental information as one approach that might help the historian identify women in Byzantium.[68] Leonora Neville's recently published *Byzantine Gender* helpfully collates some of the different strands of thought on Byzantine gender and places them summarily in one book. Neville emphasises how working inside or outside of traditional gender roles, largely formed from ancient Greek or biblical moulds, sent an explicit message to their audiences: Byzantine texts employed 'poor gender performance as a political weapon', and, she argues, scholars who do not understand this cannot fully understand Byzantine texts.[69]

Finally, Catia Galatariotou's article 'Holy Women and Witches' has also been influential in its approach and findings.[70] Alongside scholars like Eve

---

[66] A. Kaldellis, 'The Study of Women and Children: Methodological Challenges and New Directions', in P. Stephenson (ed.), *The Byzantine World* (London, 2010), pp.61-71, pp.65-6.
[67] M. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography, 11th-15th Centuries* (Leiden, 2003). While texts written by women could be considered here, there are only a few known female authors whose works are extant: this includes three liturgical poets Thekla, Kassia and Theodosia, dating from the eighth to ninth centuries, and Anna Komnene in the twelfth. Though male-authored texts do outweigh extant females ones (including those dictated, such as *typika*), some historians such as Riehle, have had success in discussing female identities and concerns through the authorial practices of these few texts: A. Riehle, 'Authorship and Gender (and) Identity. Women's Writing in the Middle Byzantine Period', in A. Pizzone (ed.), *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities* (Berlin, 2014), pp.245-62.
[68] J. Herrin, 'In Search of Byzantine Women: Three Avenues of Approach', in Av. Cameron & A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Images of Women in Antiquity* (London, 1983), pp.167-90. Herrin ties this alongside legal evidence – how women might have exercised their limited rights – and the significance of Christianity – belief and ecclesiastical structures – for women.
[69] L. Neville, *Byzantine Gender* (Leeds, 2019), pp.12-3. As discussed earlier, this approach has been exemplified by Brubaker's examination of Prokopios' description of the dynamic between Justinian and Theodora: Brubaker, 'The Age of Justinian', pp.429-30.
[70] C. Galatariotou, 'Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender', *BMGS* 9.1 (1985), pp.55-94.

Patlagean and Angeliki Laiou, Galatariotou was one of the earlier Byzantinists who looked at Byzantium through a gendered lens. She examined in depth the works of a monk, Neophytos the Recluse, which, despite being the written views of only one man, 'had well established roots in, and were expressions and reproductions of [the] patriarchal social system' in which he lived.[71] Through Neophytos' work and in comparison with others, Galatariotou argues that we can see Byzantium as fundamentally misogynistic: with Eve as the archetype, women were inherently sinful, and women of power were denounced as overtly sexual and practitioners of witchcraft, with Empress Eudoxia as Neophytos' key example.[72] While acknowledging the argument that Byzantium was generally ideologically opposed to powerful and visible women, it must also be seen that this does not always hold up within the historical record and space must be given to other considerations. Thus this thesis looks at how the empress could exist as an office of power, despite being always held by a woman, and how this dichotomy can be expressed. All of this has been brought together to build an interdisciplinary methodological framework in which the source material, both image and text, will be examined. It is the approaches towards the different media of source material that we turn to next.

Approaches to the Material

When examining these representations, the implications of imperial portraiture being executed in different media must also be considered; its different uses and the audiences it reached. We cannot expect, to give one

[71] Galatariotou, 'Holy Women and Witches', pp.58-9.
[72] Galatariotou, 'Holy Women and Witches', pp.62-6.

example, for a numismatic portrait to have had the same purpose, reaction, use, or audience, as the miniature in an illuminated manuscript. Even though both were small-scale renderings of an idealised figure, and were, technically, both portable objects, their initial purpose, audience, and impact would have been quite different. Therefore, this thesis makes use of a large variety of different media to form a comprehensive synthesis. The analysis of each of these media requires knowledge of the context and methodological approaches for each distinct category, which the subsequent sections will consider.

Numismatic Evidence

During the Principate of the Roman Empire, coins could be issued in the name of any of the imperial family, including the female members.[73] The first representation of a Roman woman on coinage occurred, arguably, in 40BC: Fulvia, the third wife of Mark Antony of the Second Triumvirate, may have been struck onto coinage in the guise of Victory.[74] Approximately a year later, Octavia, the sister of Octavian, and Mark Antony's fourth wife, was the first represented numismatically in her own right and not elided with a personification or divinity. Examples have her portrayed on the reverse of her husband's coinage in profile bust, or on the obverse, her head conjoined with or facing that of her husband (fig.1.1).[75]

---

[73] See Wood, *Imperial Women,* for a detailed study on the female imagery on Roman coins during the late Republic and the early Principate.
[74] E. A. Sydenham, *The Coinage of the Roman Republic* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1952), p.189, cat.1160. For detailed discussion of the elision, see D. E. E. Kleiner, 'Imperial Women as Patrons of the Arts in the Early Empire', in D. E. E. Kleiner & S. B. Matheson (eds.), *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, CT, 1996), pp.28-41, p.36 & cat.5, pp.56-7.
[75] Sydenham, *Coinage of Roman Republic*, p.193, cat.1196-8, 1200-1. Coins dated to 37 BC and later are similar in style but the couple are depicted with different iconography: Sydenham, *Coinage of Roman Republic*, pp.197-9, cat.1255-9, 1261-8. Here it can be seen that Octavia was represented on at least six different coin types.

With this numismatic first also came a first in terms of centrally-issued Roman coinage; Octavia was the first living woman to be represented on a coin type which spread an overt political message, incorporating an additional gendered aspect. This is seen particularly well, for instance, in two slightly later types where she is depicted between the busts of Mark Antony and Octavian, with nautical iconography on the reverse. The appearance of Octavia on Mark Antony's coins can be seen as not only a celebration of their recent marriage but, especially for the later types, as a symbol of the reconciliation between Mark Antony and Octavian; she was the link that, at least for a time, helped keep and visualise the uneasy alliance between her husband and her brother.[76] Though a point of contention within discussions concerning numismatics, agency is certainly hard to pinpoint during this period. Although the image of Octavia appeared on this coin, we are unlikely to know whether this was something she chose, and whether it was something she had a hand in designing. Nevertheless, coins were minted in her name, and was the first to do so, clearly indicating what an important figure she had become during the rule of her male relatives. Livia, Octavian's second wife, was also represented on coinage during this period – though certainly after Octavia – indicating the success of these initial coin types and leading to continued utilisation from this point on.[77]

The first portrayal of a living Roman on a coin had only been a few years prior to this; Julius Caesar was represented on the obverse of *denarii* in 44 BC,

[76] M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, (London & New York, NY, 1974), p.531; D. E. E. Kleiner, 'Sestertius of Mark Antony and Octavia with Quadriga of Hippocamps', in D. E. E. Kleiner & S. B. Matheson (eds.), *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, CT, 1996), pp.56-7, cat.5.
[77] Sydenham, *Coinage of the Roman Republic*, p.193. Coins could only have been minted with her image on them after 38BC, when Livia and Octavian were married.

shortly before his assassination.[78] This was a considerable change from earlier coin types, which had only honoured their predecessors – largely by moneyers who began to advertise their family prestige through their coins – and was a practice instantly taken up by the successors of Caesar.[79] By using the portraiture of contemporary elite women, Mark Antony, Octavian, and Octavia began a custom which continued into and throughout the Roman Empire; and a swathe of empresses and female family members followed suit, with some also appearing posthumously as *divi*.[80] There was a gap in this convention in the last half of the third century, due to the reigns of several emperors lasting only a few months; it was a representational trope that was brought out again during the reign of Constantine and, slightly earlier, during the reign of his tetrarchic rival, Galerius.

From Constantine's tenure onwards, images of Byzantine empresses were a regular occurrence on coinage, although not consistently. There are certainly breaks during these twelve centuries: a gap of around seventy years in the fifth to sixth century; a century and a half between the start of the seventh and the end of the eighth; and only one empress had her image minted in Byzantium during the entirety of the Palaiologan period.[81] However, what can be said for

---

[78] Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage,* pp.487-95, cat.480.1-28.
[79] N. Elkins, 'Coins, Contexts and an Iconographic Approach', in H. M. von Kaenel & F. Kemmers (eds.), *Coins in Context I. New Perspectives for the Interpretation of Coin Finds* (Mainz, 2009), pp.25-46, p.25, explains that taking the role of moneyers (junior officers within the *cursus honorum*) was a political practice from c.130 BC which was associated with the introduction of secret ballots for elections.
[80] For some of the more numerously represented: A. S. Robertson, *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet, University of Glasgow, Vol I: Augustus to Nerva* (London, 1962), pp.65, 68-9 (Livia as herself, and as Pax, Justitia, and Salus, on Tiberius' coins); 153, 167, 279 (Posthumous Livia, in reign of Galba and Titus); 82, 95 (Agrippina the Younger with her sisters on Gaius' coins, and bust on Claudius' coins); 328-9 (Domitia Longina on the coins of Domitian).
[81] This was Anna of Savoy. See P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol V: Michael III to Constantine XI (1258-1453), Part II: Catalogue, Concordances, and Indexes* (Washington D.C., 1999): *DOC V.II*, cat.942-3, 966-1144, 1145, 1146-74.

Byzantine coins is that, with one exception,[82] the identity of the imperial figures struck onto coins is rarely in doubt, due to the coins' context, iconography, and, most importantly, the identifiers in the legend.

Numismatic evidence will make up a large part of the materials used for representations of empresses, particularly in the Early and Middle Byzantine periods, due to their numbers and their clear identification. Empresses were found on all denominations throughout this period, certainly on base metal and gold issues, but much more rarely appearing on silver.[83] Numismatists have often discussed the agency of these coins with little in terms of conclusions: how much control did the person represented have over their appearance? We may only be relatively sure that if the central figure were unhappy with their representations or what they were portrayed alongside, they would take it up with the relevant persons: if not imperially designed, imperial approval on such widely-disseminated objects must have been a requirement of their production.[84]

In this thesis, I have made some use of how frequently coins were minted and where in the empire they were struck to then explore where and how often empresses' images would have appeared. To do this, however, I have made use of the number of types, rather than the frequency of physical coin finds, as reported by catalogues such as *RIC* and *DOC*. As Elkins argues, these coin

---

[82] This exception is Martina, the empress of the seventh-century case study, which will be discussed in that chapter.
[83] Garland mistakenly claimed that empresses up until Sophia, in the sixth century, were only depicted on *solidi*, which does not hold up when examining the historical record: Garland, *Byzantine Empresses,* pp.50-1. Base-metal issues are, however, rarer in the fifth century. Garland also argues that this base-metal appearance was to show the shared 'collegial status' between Sophia and Justin II, as these were the 'day-to-day' coins. However, if this was the case, then surely Sophia's name would appear besides Justin's?
[84] That centrally-composed instructions were sent to provincial mints can be seen in the minute differences of similar coin types: M. Vrij, *The Numismatic Iconography of the Period of Iconomachy (610-867)* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 2016).

frequency rates rely too heavily on survival – which can be arbitrarily dependent on a variety of factors – and on the interests of collectors in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries particularly, and thus could be considered unreliable.[85]

The image itself is an important point to consider. Coins often acted as a conveyor of the news of the day, though this was more of a convention in Republican and Imperial Rome. For Byzantine coins, changes in the imperial family and emphasis on facets of imperial rule were portrayed – the emperor in military costume; the empress with a cross, stressing her pious nature, and so on. Audience is, of course, an important point of consideration: would those using coins in daily transactions – base-metal – or paying their taxes – gold – have noticed minute changes in detail, such as positioning and change in regalia, or was it more likely that they would have only noticed large changes? As coins were often used as a medium to convey political messages, it may be assumed that large changes would have been noticed; figural changes, for instance, may have indicated the ascension of a new emperor or empress.[86] We may not be able to know how audiences interacted with the smaller details of numismatic portrayals, but we can assume that they had some manner of importance, otherwise poses, regalia, positioning and legends would have ceased to be followed; and Byzantine numismatic conventions are fairly consistent in this aspect.

[85] Elkins, 'Coins, Contexts, and Iconographic Approach', p.34.
[86] Elkins, 'Coins, Contexts, and an Iconographic Approach', p.30. Anecdotally, I once posed a similar question about the then new five-pound notes to forty seminar students. All of the students knew that Winston Churchill was the new figure, but only a minority of the class could remember that it had previously been Elizabeth Fry. This could simply indicate that Churchill is a more famous figure, but could also be indicative that people tend not to notice and remember detail about regularly handled objects.

Statuary

This medium was one that did not continue through the entire Byzantine period. The idealised, white marble statuary for which Antiquity is so famed, generally began to fall out of production after the Theodosian period and, in reality, would have been painted in an array of bright colours.[87] Particularly after the fifth century, there is not much evidence for the commissioning of statues, a trend which will be discussed in the first case study on Helena. Perhaps because of the focus of scholars on classical statuary, the reuse of older statues from other parts of the empire in Constantinople,[88] and the decline in their production, there are not many Byzantine statues that can be attributed to a specific, historical person. The imperial statue remnants that we do have, however, were more than likely to have been public-facing images and thus are important to examine.[89] For empresses, we must first look back at Imperial Rome and track changes over time. As with numismatic representations, the first statues to act as honorifics for live women were likely those granted to Livia and Octavia in 35 BC.[90] However, throughout the Imperial Roman period, statue representations of noble women and empresses were similar in a way that emperors and elite male figures were not. Thus, whether these statues can be identified with specific empresses will also be discussed, especially in terms of idealism, with chronological provisos, as well

[87] One recent project that explored the polychromy of ancient statuary was 'Transmission and Transformation: Ancient Polychromy in an Architectural Context', based in Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 2016. However, the practice does sporadically occur over the next few centuries; the last record that we have for an imperial statue being commissioned is Basil II: Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen, 1959), p.34.
[88] For more information on statue re-use by the Byzantines, see S. Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge, 2004), especially pp.37-49.
[89] By 'public-facing', I am referring to those statues that stood outside of privately-owned residences and in public spaces: the various fora of Constantinople, for instance, the tops of gates, within the Hippodrome, and within public baths.
[90] Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, p.333.

as the portrayal of the office itself. The same is also true of steel-yard weights, which will be explored in-depth in the second case study on Aelia Ariadne.

The famous porphyry statuary group of the Tetrarchy is a good example with which to discuss idealisation of statuary in the Late Antique period (fig.1.2).[91] On examining the smaller-scale, conjoined statue group, it can be observed that they are all facially identical – realistically, improbable – wearing the same regalia, joined at the body and embracing, thus showcasing the unity that tetrarchic rule was meant to embody, encapsulating the identity of their office. The only differences was that of facial hair; in all likelihood, the bearded figures were the *augusti*, whereas the *caesars* were clean-shaven, perhaps highlighting the senior-junior, father-son relationship that they wished to portray, similarly expressed in terms of their positioning – the *augusti* are in the position of honour on the figures' right.[92] Kleiner discussed this group in terms of the differences; the geometric, frontal style used, as well as the exclusion of the 'subtle contrapposto' of classical statuary, which marked a break with the past and symbolised their new partnership – the same method was used on a similar dual group, now in the Vatican Library (fig.1.3), and another recently unearthed in Nikomedia (fig.1.4).[93] These examples suggest that the methods of

[91] Now affixed to the exterior of San Marco, Venice. See Παραστάσεις σύντομοι χρονικαί, ed. T. Preger, *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum* vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1901), trans. Av. Cameron & J. Herrin (eds.), *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai,* Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 10 (Leiden, 1984): *Parastaseis,* pp.265-6, for commentary on the porphyry statues from the Philadelphion in Constantinople.

[92] D. E. E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven, CT, 1992), pp.404-6.

[93] Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*, p.403. The Vatican group is assembled differently however: as the figures are both bearded, it is argued that how care-worn the representation looks indicated its seniority. In summer 2016, a still-painted monumental relief was found in İzmit; its similarities to the previous two suggest that they might be Diocletian and Maximian, c.290: T. S. Ağtürk, 'A New Tetrarchic Relief from Nicomedia: Embracing Emperors', *AJA* 122.3 (2018), pp.411-26, pp.411-14.

displaying the ideals and identity of the imperial office were purposefully spread around the empire in attempt to convey these messages.

Additionally, statues of empresses – and statue groups including them – will also be discussed in terms of their contexts; where were they placed in urban topographies, and what can their location suggest? Furthermore, how did the people interact with them? Statues were recipients of ritual honours in the Imperial Roman period, certainly linking in with the imperial cult and more traditional religious activities.[94] With the legalisation and state adoption of Christianity in the fourth century, however, interactions with and attitudes towards statuary will have changed. Yet they were a part of the urban landscape through which processions and celebrations occurred regularly, particularly in nodal points of the city, thus prayers and rituals would have been integrated into the same space.

Statuary also began to go through what we might label a more mythical phase, with magical properties being assigned to them by their audiences.[95] Whether this was the original intention is not the only aspect that is important here; it is also their reception which can inform us further. That statuary held a particularly significant place in the early Byzantine period could certainly be argued; just like the wall-paintings which are next to be discussed, the view of statues was that there was the 'animation of the portrait beyond simply visual

[94] J. Elsner, 'Perspectives in Art', in N. Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (New York, NY, 2006), pp.255-77, p.265.
[95] There are examples of people carving crosses onto statues (as well as other constructed elements), as if to Christianise the images, or perhaps to fulfil an apotropaic function: I. Jacobs, 'Cross Graffiti as Physical Means to Christianize the Classical City: An Exploration of their Function, Meaning, Topographical, and Socio-Historical Contexts', in I. Garipzanov, C. Goodson & H. Maguire (eds.), *Graphic Signs of Identity, Faith, and Power in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2017), pp.175-222, pp.175-6.

likeness into a kind of embodiment of the portrayed'.[96] Not all interactions with these embodiments were positive, however, and we find instances of rioting crowds tearing down imperial statues in a violent display of their dissatisfaction.[97]

Wall Decorations

Frescoes were common during the Late Antique and early Byzantine period, into the Late Byzantine period, particularly in ecclesiastical settings. Though scholars have analysed them in different ways, recent scholarly thought demands that we see Roman wall-painting as an attempt to organise the world around them, producing different layers of 'virtual space'.[98] Palaiologan-era frescoes share some commonalities with this previous point, intertwining with traditional conventions of decorative schema in ecclesiastical settings, functioning, as seen to be appropriate, within the space.[99] The figural depictions, therefore, must be recognised as such.

Mosaics had been in existence since the ancient Greek era and were consistently used, particularly as floor decoration in earlier periods and, when opus sectile flooring became more common, as wall decorations.[100] Particularly famous are the Early and Middle Byzantine examples in churches: possibly the most iconic images of Byzantium are in this medium and from this era. We

[96] Elsner, 'Perspectives', p.264.
[97] P. Stewart, 'The Destruction of Statues in Late Antiquity', in R. Miles (ed.), *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity* (London, 1999), pp.159-89.
[98] K. Lorenz, 'Wall Painting', in B. E. Borg (ed.), *A Companion to Roman Art* (Chichester, 2015), pp.252-67, pp.255-6.
[99] See H. Maguire, 'The Cycle of Images in the Church', in L. Safran (ed.), *Heaven and Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 1998), pp.121-51, for discussion on similar schema with canonical mosaics in ecclesiastical settings.
[100] R. Ling, 'Mosaics', in B. E. Borg (ed.), *A Companion to Roman Art* (Chichester, 2015), pp.268-85, pp.268-9.

must ensure that we keep in mind the original contexts of these mosaics: for several of the examples in this study, the location in which they were situated was whitewashed to make way for new functions of the space. Thus, we are at the mercy of survival rates, and need to be aware that we may not be seeing the whole decorative schema, and reflect on potential interactions. Hence, mosaicked pavements were meant to be walked on and were decorated accordingly, and as such it is likely that walls with figural decorations were placed in that specific location to be looked at and interacted with, as well as with their surrounding images.[101]

The two are, of course, similar in terms of their contexts – though frescoes were much more common in domestic settings than wall mosaics – and the access that audiences would have had to them. Yet the creation of both mosaics and frescoes required access to different materials and trained artisans, and thus were largely the preserve of urban ecclesiastical settings and elite patronage.

Sigillography

Though there is a temptation to treat seals much like coins, owing to their similarities in size and the image types stamped upon them, it should be kept in mind that the audiences of these seals and, indeed, the seals' purpose would have been quite different. The function of the seal was twofold; it was a signature individual to the sender and a locking mechanism – if the seal's

[101] Ling, 'Mosaics', pp.276-7.

strings, which ran through a channel in the seal, were broken, then the recipient would know that the letter or package had already been opened.[102]

Through the Middle Byzantine period, the images of imperial females on seals were generally mirrored in their numismatic representations – it should be noted that there were no identifiable seals of imperial women before the eighth century, whereas there are extant seals of identifiable emperors from Justinian I onwards.[103] Regalia, titles, names, and association with divine figures were all indicated on seals, much like coinage. This was not the case towards the end of the eleventh century however, though this may largely be because there are few comparable extant coins of empresses after this point. Due to their function, it is likely that only the empresses' correspondents would have seen these images. Though this does not make the image attached any less official, it does narrow the audience considerably. Gold and silver seals were also produced but, with the exception of one example,[104] all extant empresses' seals were made of lead: as seals were common for those in public offices due to their communicative responsibilities, it is likely that this was the most cost-effective option.

Carved and Enamel Images

As might be expected, the carved and enamelled objects that enter into this study are the most variable in size of that which will be discussed, and are

[102] N. Oikonomidès, *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Washington D.C., 1985), p.3.
[103] As will be discussed in her case study, Eirene of Athens was the first empress with her own sigillographic type. There are many extant seals of emperors from before Eirene's reign, from the sixth to eighth centuries, and the Dumbarton Oaks collection numbers at over a hundred examples. The earliest identifiable seals from this collection are of Justinian I: for an example, see J. Nesbitt (ed.), *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, Volume VI: Emperors, Patriarchs of Constantinople, Addenda* (Washington D.C., 2009): *DOS VI*, 4.1, known in the collection as BZS.1958.106.563.
[104] The exception is the gold seal of Theodora (1050): Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, inv. BZS.1961.20.

made of a range of materials. Pieces of ivory were carved into consular diptychs, leaf panels that represented the figure of the empress, and pyxides for storage and ecclesiastical rituals. Cameos, initially popular during the Hellenistic and then Julio-Claudian period, went through a resurgence in the fourth century, which is where they come into this thesis. Raised relief figural images were cut from banded, multi-layered stones and, due to their size and value, are generally considered to have been decorative rather than functional, likely the purpose of intaglios.[105] Marble- and stone-based capitals decorated the tops of columns with filigree foliage, monograms, and frontal busts, in ecclesiastical and, likely, palatial contexts. Whereas capitals were clearly public-facing – though admittedly, far above general eyelines, and thus not completely accessible – ivories and cameos were more likely to be for private audiences, especially as some were commissioned as gifts.[106]

With the exception of the Pala d'Oro in San Marco, most enamelled images of empresses are either taken out of context entirely and are now simply grouped with other enamel plaques, or are from pieces of regalia, such as crowns. If compared with male figures, it could be suggested that non-contextualised enamels may have belonged in the settings of sardonyx ecclesiastical wares.[107] These pieces were both difficult and expensive to make, due to the raw materials needed, but also the expertise.

---

[105] K. Lapatin, 'Luxury Arts', in B. E. Borg (ed.), *A Companion to Roman Art* (Chichester, 2015), pp.321-43, p.329. Lapatin suggests that the most famous of the imperial cameos, the Gemma Augustae, was likely to have been worn as part of a ceremonial breastplate. Interestingly, he also examines the provenance of this item; it first appeared in the historical record in thirteenth-century France – the owner had brought it from Constantinople.

[106] C. Olovsdotter, *The Consular Image: An Iconographical Study of the Consular Diptychs* (Oxford, 2005), pp.1-2.

[107] The Treasury in San Marco, Venice, has several examples of these: D. Alcouffe, 'Classical, Byzantine and Western Hardstone-Carving', in D. Buckton, with C. Entwistle & R. Prior (eds.), *The Treasury of San Marco* (Milan, 1984), pp.73-105.

Miniatures

Several empresses in this study are represented in miniatures in illuminated manuscripts. Manuscripts were mainly high-quality goods; the amount of materials that went into making one, not to mention the skill-set required to write and illuminate one, would have made this a costly item and hence likely that only the elite would have had the means to commission them. Dependent on the contents of the manuscript, we can assume that the audience was a relatively small one, and the manuscript more likely for private use, particularly if it was a gift.

We may also include icons under this title, of which only three will be examined in this study.[108] Although it would be an unusual classification, Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina was represented as a small figure in three contemporary icons, either venerating or interacting with holy figures (fig.3.16; 3.17; 3.18).[109] As these are small yet luxury portable goods that held similar didactic functions, I have chosen to include them here. However, unlike the manuscripts discussed, it is likely that these miniature representations would have been seen by a slightly wider audience. Though we do not know about their earlier placement, two of the icons were donated to the Monastery of Meteora and it has also been argued that one of them inspired a

[108] Though the Icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy does include an image of the Empress Theodora, this icon was produced several hundred years after the events of 843 and is a reflection of fourteenth-century conceptions of this event rather than a reflection on the empress at this time. See A. Weyl Carr, cat.78, in A. Weyl Carr, 'Images: Expressions of Faith and Power', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.143-207, pp.154-5.

[109] L. Deriziotis, cat.24a-b, in A.-M. Talbot, 'Revival and Decline: Voices from the Byzantine Capital', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.17-63, pp.50-1; A. Weyl Carr, cat.24c, in A.-M. Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', pp.51-2.

new type of fresco scene of the Doubting Thomas, both of which are suggestive of their audience.[110]

Textual Representations

While the linguistic turn and the subsequent caution with textual evidence and representations of empresses has already been discussed – wherein women appearing in textual sources could be used as vehicles to further the narrative, or used to critique or praise a male figure – chronicles and historical narratives will still be used to some extent within this thesis. For one, if the role of the woman is being subverted, it can thus be inferred what the actual role of the woman was assumed to be, from the author's viewpoint at least.[111] In some cases, such as that of Eudokia Ingerina, acknowledgement and discussion of the bias held by contemporary texts and the subsequent critique of her character, is necessary to understand how her representation may have been affected.[112] Furthermore, these genres of textual sources can prove useful for some of the details on and actions of the empresses; the patronage of a building, was a political action which was often commented on. A great deal of our knowledge for the patronage of an empress like Eirene of

---

[110] F. Gargova, 'The Meteora Icon of the Incredulity of Thomas Reconsidered', in L. Theis, M. Mullett, & M. Grünbart, with G. Fingarova & M. Savage (eds.), *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond* (Vienna, 2014), pp.369-82, pp.377-81, discusses the innovation of the Doubting Thomas icon and its effects.

[111] Clear examples include the writings of Psellos and Prokopios. For an examination of gendered rhetoric, see L. Brubaker, 'Sex, Lies and Textuality: The Secret History of Prokopios and the Rhetoric of Gender in Sixth-Century Byzantium', in L. Brubaker & J. H. M. Smith (eds.), *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900* (Cambridge & New York, NY, 2004), pp.83-101. Here Brubaker convincingly argues that we can see what these idealised gender roles looked like, exactly because it was the opposite of how Prokopios described Theodora and Justinian.

[112] See Chapter Six: Eudokia Ingerina. The pro-Macedonian, or otherwise, attitude held by contemporary authors will be discussed, not only to deepen our understanding of Eudokia's role and how she is represented, her place within the imperial family and the challenges therein, but also to get to grips with scholarly opinion on her.

Athens, for example, comes almost solely from written materials.[113] Yet these textual records must also be used carefully: as will be seen in the Theodora case study, the joint works of patronage of Theodora and Justinian were downplayed by contemporary source material, like that of Prokopios, and only attributed to Justinian.[114] Texts like hagiographies, while more invested in providing proof for the holiness of their saint, can also be mined for incidental information.[115] While these texts will not be used by themselves in this thesis, they will certainly be used to supplement the imagery found within the historical record.

Following on from this, literary records can also be useful for projects such as this, especially when used to supplement the objects and images lost over the centuries. To help clarify and discover materials that are no longer extant, *ekphrasis*, the detailed description of a building or artisanal product, has a place within this thesis by its nature. Of course, *ekphrasis* should be viewed with the proviso of the intended audience in mind and the reason for its creation; it should not just be viewed as a description of the building, or image.[116] Thus, some questions will be kept in mind when using it: what is the historical context, and is the author describing this newly-built church to please his patron? How might that affect his portrayal of it? Even so, the detailed descriptions of sites housing representations of empresses within them, now lost to us, will be of great use to this thesis, such as that of the

---

[113] See Chapter Five: Eirene for further details, particularly 5.4.2.
[114] For further discussion on this, and how other media can be used to uncover the patronage of empresses, see sections 3.2.2, 3.2.3 & 3.3 within Chapter Three: Theodora. The literary sources are also often silent on a 'bad' empress such as Martina, criticising her by her omission.
[115] This will be seen when looking into the family structure of Ariadne, for example – see 2.5-2.5.1.
[116] R. Macrides & P. Magdalino, 'The Architecture of ekphrasis: Construction and Context of Paul the Silentiary's Poem on Hagia Sophia', *BMGS* 12 (1988), pp.47-82.

Kainourgion mosaic in the Great Palace.[117] This is also true of those texts, such as the *ekphrasis* of Paul the Silentiary, which describe the contemporary positioning of elements within structures that still stand.[118]

Additionally, patriographical texts of Constantinople – a phenomenon that becomes popular in the middle Byzantine period – have also been selected to elucidate further what might have been found in urban landscapes. It is also suggestive of what the authors thought was appropriate to be situated there; the perceptions of representations is equally as important as the subject actually portrayed and will thus also be selected for use. Records of patronage and objects owned, mentioned occasionally in histories and chronicles, and, more often, found in the *typika* of patronised monasteries and wills, can further elucidate the activities, motivations, and influence of imperial women. Great use will be made of *typika* in the latter chapters of this thesis, particularly as, by their nature, they are able to give us insight into the agency of the empresses: this is particularly the case for Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.[119]

Further to this, epigraphy will also be brought in as evidence for representations. Those inscriptions found on statue bases, carved into the walls of patronised buildings, and labelling mosaics and frescoes, also help to supplement the analysis of images: they can be used to identify, where possible, empresses, and assist the present-day viewer in puzzling out the message conveyed by the image, by means of titles awarded, location and use of space, and public roles. It is important to read these inscriptions alongside the images

[117] See 6.5.1 in Chapter Six: Eudokia Ingerina for discussion of this type.
[118] As discussed in 3.3, this description gives details about the portable objects and contemporary fixtures of Hagia Sophia in the time of Theodora and Justinian.
[119] See 10.3.1-5 in Chapter Ten: Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.

that they accompany, interdependently, rather than separately; this is also true of inscriptions found alongside manuscript illuminations.[120]

Terminology and Categorisation

In recent historiography, much has been rightly problematised with the terminology that scholars use to discuss this period. For example, the denizens of what historians would call the Byzantine Empire would have named themselves as Romans, Ρωμαίοι, as can be seen in their histories and chronicles, and in imperial imagery.[121] This has also been reflected most recently in Liz James' research on the concept of 'Byzantine art' wherein she considers why artisan products might be considered 'Byzantine', if at all, and draws attention to the historian's problematic predilection to insist that high-quality art – which, again, is a choice on the part of the present-day viewer – particularly mosaics in the Medieval West, must have been made in Constantinople, or at least by workmen from Byzantium.[122]

The above problems, which largely consider identity, also relate to the issue concerning the date of the beginning of what is now called the Byzantine Empire. Arguments that a transformation occurred to create Byzantium – or

---

[120] L. James, 'Introduction: Art and Text in Byzantium', in L. James (ed.), *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.1-12, pp.1-2.
[121] The focus on 'Byzantine identity' has become more common over the past two decades and was recently explored in A. Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity* (Philadelphia, PA, 2013). Leonora Neville, in her recent book on gender, has argued for the use of Medieval Roman Empire: Neville, *Byzantine Gender*, pp.2-4.
[122] In a recent publication, James considers these problems from the angle of mosaic production, placement, and patronage after the Fourth Crusade: L. James, 'Made in Byzantium? Mosaics after 1204', in A. Lymberopoulou (ed.), *Cross-Cultural Interaction between Byzantium and the West, 1204-1669: Whose Mediterranean Is it Anyway?* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2018), pp.258-71. She concludes that while we cannot know the origins of the workforces behind these mosaics, it is likely that mosaics were being made in the medieval west – and east, for that matter – to create connections to early Roman, Christian works.

that the Roman Empire 'fell' – range from concluding dates of AD 293, 324, 395, 491, or even as late as the seventh century, and have been taken into account in the conception and organisation of this thesis.[123] There have also been considerations on the issues that arise from periodisation: what is known by one historian as Late Antiquity might be known by another as Late Imperial Rome or, coinciding with geographical location, either the Western or the Eastern Roman Empire, leading to possible confusion. Additionally, the actual terms used to discuss this period should be reflected on; negative connotations are brought to the fore when using the infamous 'Dark Ages', as well as descriptors including the term 'medieval'. However, common sense must dictate that scholars require simple terms to signpost clearly what they are discussing, even if they must first define them for the sake of clarity. A full analysis of the accuracy and impact of these terms is beyond the remit of this thesis; categorisation as a tool, however, can be useful, when used with caution, to help us recognise and construct meaningful discussions.

For the purposes of this thesis, I have decided to identify the beginning of the Byzantine Empire as roughly coinciding with the years between the legalisation of Christianity, when the imperial family and elite classes began to openly identify themselves as Christian and strongly encouraged others to do so, and the movement of the capital from Rome to Constantinople. This then leads us to a short period between 313, with the Edict of Milan, and 330, the official commemoration of Constantinople. Consequently, this allows for the

[123] The varied reasons are as follows: AD 293, the establishment of the tetrarchy and thus a completely different style of rule; AD 324, the accession of Constantine I to sole rule after the defeat of Licinius; AD 395, the division of the Roman Empire between the sons of Theodosios I; and AD 491, alludes to the numismatic reformation of Anastasios. The changes in the seventh century are discussed below.

consideration of Helena, elevated to the role of *augusta* in 324, as the first of the Byzantine empresses, thus making space for a discussion of representations of Helena, and of her potential role as the paragon for subsequent empresses.

The term Late Antiquity has also been used to allow for the understanding of the period between and overlapping with the chronological spheres of Imperial Rome and Byzantium. This begins with Diocletian's establishment of the tetrarchic system of rule in 293, which created a distinct change in governance and showed a certain stability after the chaos of the short-lived emperors of the late third century. I would then suggest that the term should not be used after the seventh century, due to the clear shift after the expansion of Islam in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, and the subsequent changes to Byzantium's borders and its interaction with that of its eastern neighbours, its change in urban patterns, language, and emergent religious controversies, such as Iconomachy.[124] Accordingly, after the seventh century, the term 'medieval' will be employed when needed and will be continually used, with specific adjectival terms, until the fifteenth century. The second half of the fifteenth century will be signalled as the end of the medieval period for our purposes, with the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Prior to the end of the medieval period, the consequences of the Fourth Crusade must also be considered. Before 1204, the expansion and shrinkage of the borders of Byzantium may have been in a state of consistent flux, but this did not always necessarily have an impact on the representations of empresses.

[124] The seventh and eighth centuries as a period of distinct change, viewed even by the Byzantines as such, and the connected phenomenon known as Iconomachy are explored in L. Brubaker & J. Haldon *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c.680-850* (Cambridge, 2011).

The main exception to this is the case study of the tenth century, wherein the cultural and societal boundaries of Byzantium seemed more open to exogamic marriages, which had an impact on the role and representations of Theophano. However, after 1204, with the Latin occupation of Constantinople and outlying lands, patterns of power and continuations of symbols of power – akin to a civil war, without the common ground of the imperial city – as well as innovations, began to emerge in 'Byzantine-held' lands.[125] The difficulty then comes after the re-conquest of Constantinople by Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1261; where does this leave the nascent centres of power – Epiros, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Trebizond – and the people who ruled from them, with the reestablishment of the traditional power base of Constantinople? Particularly of interest is the representation of the imperial women, the *basilissae* and *despoinae* of these peripheral polities, which will be analysed in the latter section of this work, especially with the eleventh case study, Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina. Is she really a 'Byzantine', never mind an empress? Maria has been included in this study partly to examine these questions. These issues also impact on the tenth case study, an examination of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, and the last case study, on Helena Dragaš.

Although arguments can and have been made for the continuation of Byzantine traditions and culture after 1453,[126] for the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen to end my study of the Byzantine Empire with the fall of

[125] A. Eastmond, *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium: Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond* (Aldershot & Burlington, VT, 2004), especially pp.3-5 for an overview of this idea.
[126] See the most recently published SPBS volume, the remit of which argues for the dates of the cultural period as from 1204 to as late as 1669: A. Lymberopoulou, (ed.), *Cross-Cultural Interaction between Byzantium and the West, 1204-1669: Whose Mediterranean Is It Anyway?* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2018). Other proponents for the continuation of Byzantium include Trebizond, the Morea, and competitors known as 'Third Rome'.

Constantinople to the Ottomans as, for the majority of the chronology of the empire, Constantinople was the centre of imperial power. There were only a few instances when the emperor resided outside the imperial capital; there was too much to be drawn on in terms of legitimacy if one ruled from the 'Queen of Cities', through the formal, ceremonial entering of the city gates by the emperor (or usurper), ruling from the palaces therein, and the consistent association with and activities within the structures of its vast imperial history.[127] As such, this thesis will end with the last empress to be represented in a physical format according to this time-scale; Helena Dragaš, wife of Manuel II Palaiologos and mother of the last Byzantine – or Roman – to rule as emperor from Constantinople, Constantine XI Palaiologos.

This thesis seeks to address the following question: what messages did the representations of Byzantine empresses seek to convey, and was this static over the entirety of the empire? Through an analysis of physical depictions, and literary records of depictions and activities, this thesis will show that, though entrenched in tradition, the representation of the empress was not fixed. Instead, it changed and adapted over the whole of the Byzantine Empire.

Initially, it will be noted that representations transformed from the indistinguishable elite Roman woman, to the distinct, elaborately costumed

[127] M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), gives many examples of imperial ceremonial entrances into Constantinople. It should be pointed out that some emperors spent a great deal of time outside of the capital on campaign, such as Herakleios and his campaigns against the Persians, and Alexios Komnenos who was accompanied by Eirene Doukaina: *Alexiad*, XII.3, pp.337-40. See M. Mullett, 'Tented Ceremony: Ephemeral Performances under the Komnenoi', in A. Beihammer, S. Constantinou & M. Parani (eds.), *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean: Comparative Perspectives* (Leiden, 2013), pp.487-513, who convincingly argues that the space of the campaign tent could double as that of mobile, ceremonial court.

portraiture of the empress. It was the creation of a distinct office, one that could not be confused with the roles of other elite women. This development is compounded by the introduction of Christian iconography, a permanent fixture in portrayals. There is also a stylistic shift of the empress' image, moving closer to the traditional base of the emperor's power, through the use of masculine attributes and contexts – imperial victory and triumph – and mixed with older ideals of motherhood and security. This is further showcased by the concurrent development of the presentation of the emperor and the empress as the imperial unit. This broadens out from the Middle Byzantine period, and the office of the empress is used to legitimise and reaffirm dynastic portrayals, as well as, in some cases, their roles within regencies and the legitimisation of emperors.

One major theme that will run through this thesis is the idea of competition and competitive agency. The empress' representation, with all of its recognisable, imperial elements as 'branding', constructs a narrative of imperial power that could be used in competition with rival power bases, internal or external. As a key public role of the empress, we will see the political and visible action of patronage, both ecclesiastic and occasionally civic institutions, taking place throughout the entirety of the period. Thus, while her image is rooted in continuity and tradition, and thus authority, the office of the empress was also innovative and changeable.

The Representations of Imperial Women of the Early Byzantine Empire

Chapter One: Flavia Iulia Helena

To a present-day audience, Helena is probably one of the most well-known of the empresses of this series of case studies. She was the mother of arguably one of the most successful emperors, Constantine the Great (306-337); the supposedly pious woman who was said to have unearthed the relic of the True Cross; a celebrated saint;[1] a prolific patron of churches and shrines, and *augusta* of an empire that, during her lifetime at least, spanned across three continents. Yet for such a key figure in the later reign of Constantine, there is surprisingly little reliable information in the sources about her, particularly concerning her early life. It appears unlikely that she was from an elite background, as the primary sources that discuss her in any detail either gloss over her earlier life or ignore it entirely.[2] Some claim that she was of an 'undistinguished' background, whilst others suggest that she was an innkeeper or perhaps worked in the stables.[3] Other authors take it further still and describe Helena as a concubine or a harlot.[4]

---

[1] She is celebrated as a saint in eastern and western churches: most Orthodox and Anglican churches hold her feast day on the 21st May (which she shares with Constantine) and her feast day in the Roman Catholic Church is the 18th August.

[2] The main primary sources on the life of Helena are Eusebius of Caesarea and Ambrose of Milan. Other sources – Eutropius, Socrates, Sozomen – largely give basic biographical information. For detailed analysis of the treatment of Helena within the historical record, see A. Georgiou, *The Cult of Flavia Iulia Helena in Byzantium* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2013), and see A. Georgiou, 'Helena: The Subversive Persona of an Ideal Christian Empress in Early Byzantium', *JECS* 21.4 (2013), pp.597-624, especially pp.600-9 for the 'invention' of Helena by later sources, particularly fifth- and sixth-century authors.

[3] Eutropius, *Brevarium ab Urbe Condita*, ed. F. Ruehl (Stuttgart, 1887), trans. H.W. Bird (ed.), *Eutropius: Breviarium*, TTH 14 (Liverpool, 1993, repr. 2011): Eutropius, X.II; Ambrose of Milan, *De obitu Theodosii*, ed. O. Faller, CSEL 73 (Vienna, 1955), pp.369-401, trans. J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, with C. Hill (eds.), *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches,* TTH 43 (Liverpool, 2005), pp.174-203: Ambrose, 42. The word used is *stabularia*, which is largely translated as inn-keeper.

[4] Zosimus, Ἱστορία Νέα, ed. L. Mendelssohn (Leipzig, 1887), trans. R. T. Ridley (ed.), *Zosimus: New History*, BA 2 (Canberra, 1982): Zosimus, II.40. Evagrios Scholastikos later explained that as a pagan, Zosimus was purposefully attempting to defame Constantine – here by besmirching his mother's character – owing to his role in the adoption of Christianity: Evagrios, III.40.

Around the year 272, Helena met Constantius Chlorus and bore a son, Constantine, but it is unclear whether the two were married. Neither of the two main sources for Helena – Eusebius of Caesarea and Ambrose of Milan – mention their union, which, if it had occurred, is unusual; both works are heavily biased in favour of Helena and Constantine, and would have assured their audiences that Helena's child was not born illegitimately. However, Eutropius claims that Constantius, and also Galerius, on their elevation to the rank of *caesar*, were 'obliged to divorce the wives they had before' so that they could make politically advantageous marriages within the tetrarchy.[5] This may be an indirect reference to Helena, but she was not mentioned by name in this source. Later in this text, it was noted that Constantine's mother, though of lowly birth, was in fact, Constantius' wife, again indicating a legitimate union between Helena and Constantius.[6] Recent scholarship, however, now tends to agree that Helena was Constantius' concubine, and the confusion stems from Constantine's attempts during his reign to promote his own legitimacy.[7] Whilst Constantius later married Theodora – either Maximian's stepdaughter or

[5] Eutropius, IX.XXII. Galerius' wife was Galeria Valeria, the daughter of the senior emperor, the *augustus*, Diocletian, who instigated the tetrarchy in 293. The name of Galerius' previous wife is unknown. For discussion on the lack of information, particularly the names and dates, of imperial women and the reasons behind this portrayal in the sources, see L. James, 'Ghosts in the Machine: The Lives and Deaths of Constantinian Imperial Women', in B. Neil & L. Garland (eds.), *Questions of Gender in Byzantine Society* (Farnham, 2013), pp.93-112. Leadbetter believes that Constantius (and Galerius) were actually married to the daughters of the tetrarchs years prior to becoming their *caesars*, in 289: B. Leadbetter, 'The Illegitimacy of Constantine and the Birth of the Tetrarchy', in S. N. C. Lieu & D. Montserrat (eds.), *Constantine: History, Historiography and Legend* (London & New York, NY, 1998), pp.74-85, p.77.

[6] Eutropius, X.II. Eutropius was writing during the reign of Julian (361-363), some twenty years after the death of Helena; though not contemporaneous with these events, he may have had access to relevant sources.

[7] Leadbetter, 'The Illegitimacy of Constantine', pp.74-85, examines the relationship between Helena and Constantius; he concludes that Helena was a concubine, as was the case for the previous partner of Galerius (resulting in his son, Candidianus) and Constantine (Minervina). On reflection, Drijvers believes that their partnership was one of concubinage, as an 'accepted form of cohabitation for partners of different social provenance': J. W. Drijvers, 'Helena Augusta, the Cross and the Myth: Some New Reflections', *Millennium: Yearbook on the Culture and History of the First Millennium C.E.* 8 (2011), pp.125-74, p.131.

daughter from his first marriage –[8] who bore him six children, it was his firstborn son Constantine who was proclaimed emperor in Eboracum on Constantius' death in 306.[9] Thus, though Helena had been cast aside, for a woman of higher status and who came with better political connections, it was Helena who became the mother of an emperor and then a woman of imperial status, the *augusta*.

Details on her life between the elevation of her son and her own elevation are scant: Constantine was sent to be educated at the court of Diocletian in Nikomedia and it is thought that she may have re-joined her son after 306, and then lived in Trier until the 310s.[10] Helena may also have lived in Rome during this period; there is evidence that she built on the land that she owned there at this time.[11] She was proclaimed *augusta* by Constantine in 324 and around the same time had coins minted in her name.[12] Some years thereafter, Helena visited 'the whole east' of the empire on an imperial tour, specifically where the main events in Christ's life took place, such as Bethlehem and the Mount of

---

[8] There is some confusion about Theodora's parentage, but I have found Leadbetter's argument that she is Maximian's daughter from a first marriage who was 'of the Hannibaliani', convincing: Leadbetter, 'The Illegitimacy of Constantine', pp.75-7.
[9] Eutropius, IX. XXII; X. II. See Appendix 1.1 for a diagram of the extended family.
[10] Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, pp.21-4, presents an overview of the sources. Drijvers also discusses the evidence around the possibility that Helena may have been from Drepanum (Bithynia), later enlarged and renamed Helenopolis by Constantine, but it is inconclusive: Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, pp.9-12.
[11] Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena', p.57, discusses the sources and archaeological evidence. The tract of land, the *fundus Laurentus*, had a basilica built on it, as well as a palace and the *thermae Helenae*, the latter of which has an inscription recording her repairs: *CIL,* VI 1136. Because of the inscriptions dedicated to her in Rome, Drijvers suggests that Helena lived in Rome for most of her life after Constantine's success at the battle of Milivian Bridge in 312: J. W. Drijvers, 'Helena Augusta and the City of Rome', in M. Verhoeven, L. Bosman & H. van Asperen (eds.), *Monuments & Memory: Christian Cult Buildings and Constructions of the Past. Essays in Honour of Sible de Blaauw* (Turnhout, 2016), pp.147-53, p.147.
[12] For this date of 324, I have followed the dating of the coins: P. M. Bruun, *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol. VII: Constantine – Licinius, AD 313-337* (London, 1966): *RIC VII,* p.53, 116; Eusebius of Caesarea, Βίος Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου, ed. F. Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantins* (Berlin, 1975, rev. 1992), trans. Av. Cameron & S. G. Hall (eds.), *Life of Constantine*, Clarendon Ancient History Series (Oxford, 1999): Eusebius, III.47.2.

Olives.[13] She was not there to play the role of pilgrim; instead scholars tend to see this journey as *iter principis*, wherein Helena patronised churches and inspected the eastern provinces with 'imperial concern'.[14] Though it was later believed that Helena had unearthed the relics of the True Cross while in Jerusalem, this was not mentioned by extant contemporary sources.[15] The first mention of the discovery by Helena specifically was in the funeral oration of Theodosios I by Ambrose of Milan in 395, nearly seventy years after her journey.[16] In this funeral oration, Ambrose also compared Helena to the Virgin Mary; just as the Virgin Mary liberated Eve, and thus all women, so too did

[13] Eusebius, III.43.1-3, 44.

[14] Eusebius, III.42.1. Pilgrimage was not a popular phenomenon at this point, but was a growing trend, especially for later imperial women looking to emulate Helena. M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800* (University Park, PA, 2005), specifically the chapter on 'Women and Religious Travel', pp.107-53, explores Helena's impact on and association with pilgrimage. Dietz argues that Helena was not so much a pilgrim as an 'emissary for her son', but later became associated with 'temporary' journeys to the holy places in the east: Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins and Pilgrims*, pp.110-2. For the argument that this was *iter principis*, and a new focus by Constantine on Jerusalem as 'the centre' of the empire, see K. Holum, 'Hadrian and St Helena: Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Holy Land Pilgrimage', in R. Ousterhout (ed.), *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (Urbana, IL, 1990), pp.66-81. Drijvers agrees with Holum's assessment, and explains that it was on behalf of and fully organised by the court, but to distract from political and religious issues: Drijvers, 'Helena Augusta, the Cross', pp.139-41. Lenski argued that Helena was a political refugee, fleeing the repercussions of her involvement in court intrigue in 326: N. Lenski, 'Empresses in the Holy Land: The Creation of a Christian Utopia in Late Antique Palestine', in L. Ellis & F. L. Kidner (eds.), *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity: Sacred and Profane* (Aldershot, 2004), pp.113-24.

[15] Of course, this would be unusual, especially for authors like Eusebius whose particular focus was on highlighting Constantine's commitment to Christianity. Drake, on the other hand, argues that Eusebius was silent on this issue on purpose: see A. H. Drake, 'Eusebius on the True Cross', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985), pp.1-22. For further discussion on the legend of Helena and the True Cross: Georgiou, *The Cult of Flavia Iulia Helena*, & S. Borgehammer, *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend* (Stockholm, 1991).

[16] Ambrose, 41-51. The discovery of the True Cross in Jerusalem was reported in the historical record in the mid-fourth century, but was not associated with Helena: Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses, PG* 33, part. trans. J. W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding the True Cross* (Leiden, 1992), p.82: Cyril, IV. 10, X. 19, XIII. 4. As has been discussed by Drijvers, the main purpose of Cyril's text was to establish and promote the primacy of his see: J. W. Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City* (Leiden & Boston, MA, 2004).

Helena redeem the emperors.[17] Eusebius wrote that Helena died soon after returning from her journey to Jerusalem: he did not give an exact date, but scholars tend to date her death to either late 328 or early 329, as coins minted in her name come to a stop around 329-30.[18]

Helena was selected for this series of case studies as she was the first to be declared *augusta* after a series of integral changes in the empire – the legalisation of Christianity, the move of the capital to Constantinople, and the steady dissolution of the tetrarchy into sole rule – alongside Fausta, Constantine's second wife, thus bringing interesting dimensions to her representation which both continued and broke with Roman traditions. She was also particularly visible during the reign of Constantine, and several sites were named for her: a palace in Constantinople, baths in Rome, a city in Palestine and Bithynia called Helenopolis, and the province of Helenopontus.[19] Helena as a case study ticks all of the thematic boxes examined within this thesis. While the discussion of statuary will look at problems of identification and idealisation, coins were minted in her name, bearing her portrait in a variety of denominations and spread across the entire empire, as were Fausta's. Unlike Fausta, however, who suffered under *damnatio memoriae* after her probable execution in 326,[20] Helena became a role model for the empresses in

[17] Ambrose, 47-48. Georgiou convincingly argued that since the conception of this idea, Helena as a model was used to praise or to criticise contemporary empresses: Georgiou, 'Helena', pp.609-11.
[18] Eusebius, III.46.1; *RIC VII*, pp.212-3, 268-70, 387, 453, 553-4, 557, 626, 651, 691, 710-1; and see Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, p.73. This is not including the posthumous coins minted by Constantine's sons in the succession issues of 337.
[19] *Wars*, I.xxiv, p.229; Eusebius, 4.61. There is some indication that she may have founded some of these cities, though the one in Bithynia (Drepanum) is still a matter of debate: D. N. Angelova, *Sacred Founders: Women, Men, and Gods in the Discourse of Imperial Founding, Rome through Early Byzantium* (Oakland, CA, 2014), pp.143-4.
[20] E. R. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation:* Damnatio Memoriae *and Roman Imperial Portraiture* (Leiden, 2004), p.222. They were married in 307 and had five children together. After her possible execution, she was put under *damnatio memoriae* by Constantine; inscriptions were erased and changed to honour Helena, and Fausta's name was excluded

the years that followed her death; a paragon of philanthropy and piety.[21] Her positioning within the imperial family has already been touched on, as has her public role as a patron, but both themes will be addressed in much more detail when looking in detail at the numismatic evidence, inscriptions on statue bases, and her appearance within later texts. I will therefore explore first how Helena was depicted in her own time, taking into account the difficulties faced with the identification of ancient statuary and other forms of representation, like cameos, and then discuss how those images may have been perceived by later generations. That the reputation and image of Helena remains relevant to citizens in the empire several centuries later is apparent in numerous mentions of her image in patriographic texts of the eighth and tenth centuries. As will be examined later in this chapter, various statues dotted around the cityscape of Constantinople were attributed to her in these texts, suggesting that her legacy as a pious empress continued.

1.1 Numismatic Evidence

As far as physical evidence for the image of Helena goes, little extant material can be, without hesitation, identified specifically as the woman herself. One medium in which this is not a problem is that of coins. After outlining her

from contemporary texts, including Eusebius' biography of Constantine. Possible reasons for punishment, given by the sources, include an affair with his son, Crispus, by Constantine's first wife, or a false accusation of rape committed by Crispus. See D. Woods, 'On the Death of the Empress Fausta', *GR* 45 (1998), pp.70-86, for an overview of the sources and his discussion of other explanations for Fausta's death, such as an attempted abortion, perhaps even of Crispus' child. Harries has convincingly argued that the primary sources discussing this incident have filled the gap with fictions based on earlier stories – Phaedra and Hippolytus, Joseph and Potiphar's wife, Nero and Octavia: J. Harries, *Imperial Rome, AD 284 to 363: The New Empire* (Edinburgh, 2012), pp.259-60.

[21] See Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena', for discussion of Helena as a role model. This is also explored in James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.14, 91-2. Pulcheria is particularly well known for the parallels that she drew between herself and Helena: for analysis on Pulcheria's tenure see Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, particularly pp.195-216.

visit to the eastern provinces of the empire and her role in imperial business there, Eusebius states that, from then on, Helena's portrait was displayed on the gold coinage of the empire.[22] In addition to Eusebius' account, coins of both gold and base metal denominations survive in the historical record from mints across the empire, thus indicating the spread of her image geographically and, due to the denomination variation, at a wider societal level too. The iconography used is also indicative of the continuation of Roman numismatic traditions, as well as the establishment of newer ideas that were built on and evolved throughout the continuation of the empire.

Just as his predecessors did in Rome, Constantine and other later members of the tetrarchy carried on the practice of putting female relatives on their coins and at least five imperial females received this honour – the *augustae* Helena and Fausta, Galeria Valeria, and Constantine's stepmother, Theodora and stepsister, Constantia.[23] What is significant to note, as well as the continuation and changes in the iconography, is the timing of Constantine's issues. Coins were a medium that reached a large and diverse audience across the empire and beyond and, alongside the long-held tradition of using both images and titles to convey political messages, they were created with the permission, and perhaps with the explicit input, of the emperors. Thus, the timing of the mint and iconographical design of coins can be considered to hold significance in terms of intended message and audience, and hence a discussion of these aspects is important: why did Constantine choose to have

[22] Eusebius, III.47.2. Eusebius records the timing of this incorrectly, as Helena's image (as well as Fausta's) appeared on coinage before Helena travelled to the eastern provinces.
[23] For examples of Galeria Valeria on coins: C. H. V. Sutherland, *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol. VI: The Diocletian Reform – Maximinus II, AD 294-313* (London, 1967): *RIC VI*, cat.29, 33-36 (Thessaloniki), gold and base metal respectively. See below for discussion on Constantia, Constantine's stepsister, and see below in text for further discussion of Fausta and Theodora represented numismatically.

newly designed coins, which highlighted traditional tropes, released at this time?

1.1.1 The Early Coinage of Helena

But first, an introduction to Helena's early coinage. Base metal coins which bore the bust of Helena (fig.1.5) – as well as types with the image of Fausta (fig.1.6) – on the obverse with a large eight-point star in a wreath on the reverse, dating from 318-9 and minted in Thessaloniki, referred to them as *nobilissimae feminae*; these appear to be the earliest representation of Helena in coinage.[24] From these coins, we can ascertain the status of both of the women in the early days of Constantine's reign; neither was entitled empress, regardless of Constantine's position as the Western *augustus* under the crumbling tetrarchic system. Instead they were given titles which indicated their status as women of the court. Presumably these coins were minted at Thessaloniki in this instance due to Constantine's recent victory over his eastern counterpart, Licinius (308-324), at Cibalae (316) and then a second battle in Thrace (317), which did not result in a final, decisive victory for either party, but did result in a settlement for peace.[25] It was decided that Constantine's two sons – Crispus, by his first wife Minervina, and Constantine II (337-340), by Fausta – and Licinius' son, Licinius II, should be elevated to the rank of *caesar* further to this settlement. Some types from this coin series,

[24] *RIC VII*, pp.506-7, cat.49, 51 & 48, 50 (Thessaloniki), for Fausta and Helena respectively. Helena's legend on these coins was HELENA N F, thus 'Helena, *nobilissima femina*', 'Helena, most noble lady'.
[25] H. A. Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine* (London & New York, NY, 1996), p.39. The consequences of the settlement of this battle included Constantine gaining the territories of Pannonia and Macedonia, thus the mint at Thessaloniki had recently come under his control.

which continued on from 317-318, had legends which indicated the plurality of *caesars* in this period: 'CAESS' and 'CAESARVM' were often seen on the coins of the three *caesars*.[26] Thus, ostensibly the promotion of Licinius' son alongside his own was a healing gesture between the two rivals, but Constantine had the clear advantage, from not only the number of 'his' *caesars* but also due to the coinciding release of the coins of female members of his family. It is probable that Helena and Fausta had their coins minted at this particular juncture to showcase the familial links of Constantine's house, enhancing the status of his recently-elevated sons – perhaps Helena was included in this due to Crispus not being the natural-born son of Fausta, as it would hardly have been appropriate to represent Minervina – and to celebrate his recent victory. The underlying rivalry between Licinius and Constantine may also be suggestive of why there was no comparative image of Licinius' wife, Constantia.[27]

1.1.2 The Case of Galeria Valeria

In the first two decades of the fourth century, there were only three elite women represented on coins. Before the turn of the century, there had been a sparsity of elite female imagery on coins, and no *augusta* depicted after 275, likely a result of the tenuous and ever-changing political scenarios of the 'third-

[26] See the *BIFA* collection for 'CAESARVM NOSTRORVM', 'Our *caesars*' of Crispus (R3214, Thessaloniki), as well as similar types minted at a range of places, showing their wide distribution – London, Trier, Lyons, Aquileia, Ticinum, Nikomedia, Antioch.
[27] Constantia was also the half-sister of Constantine, and on the deaths of her husband and son, for which Constantine was responsible, she moved back to his court; see Appendix 1.1. Constantine awarded her with the title *nobilissima femina* and minted commemorative coins in her name posthumously (330AD): H. A. Pohlsander, 'Constantia', *Ancient Society* 25 (1994), pp.151-67, pp.163-4; *RIC VII*, p.571, cat.15 (Constantinople) – *RIC VII* gives the dates as 326-7. The newly minted *caesars* also appeared on base metal coinage after their elevation. They largely follow a similar typology to that described of Helena and Fausta, though the wreath encircles *VOT V* and the title changes to *CAESARVM NOSTRORVM*: *RIC VII*, cat.36-40, 57-8 (for Crispus), 43-7 (for Constantine II) and 33-5, 41-2 (for Licinius) for comparable types from Thessaloniki.

century crisis'.[28] Other than Helena and Fausta, however, there was one other contemporaneous elite woman who was represented numismatically: Galeria Valeria, the daughter of the *augustus* Diocletian and the wife of his subordinate and *caesar*, Galerius. As with Constantius Chlorus and Theodora, Valeria's and Galerius' match was a political one, designed to bind the tetrarchy closer through marital ties. She had two general types: in the common first type, Valeria was depicted wearing a diadem, with her hair elaborately rolled back to be curled underneath. She was also depicted as wearing a single-strand necklace; empresses of the third century had slowly started to be depicted wearing jewellery and we see this reflected in the numismatic evidence of the fourth century (fig.1.7).[29] In the rarer, second type, she was depicted as wearing the laurel wreath, with a jewelled section attached, regalia not seen in comparative female coins (fig.1.8).[30] On the reverse of both types, the figure of Venus, draped and holding an apple, was depicted along with the legend 'VENERI VICTRICI', 'Victorious Venus'; this general type was frequently struck on the coins of Roman empresses, to associate the empress with divine favour in victory. The last comparable example was struck in 258 with the image of Cornelia Salonina (253-268), and also appeared during the tenures of the

[28] Ulpia Severina (270-5) was the last *augusta* in the 'third-century crisis' of soldier emperors to have coins minted in her name: similar types show her image on the reverse with her husband, Aurelian (270-5), in celebration of their union: P. H. Webb, *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol V, Part I: Valerian to Florian* (London, 1962): *RIC V.I*, cat.75-6, 79 (Aurelian), cat.3, 16-7, 19 (Severina). Other types show only Severina on the obverse, labelled AVG, with divinities and personifications on the reverse: *RIC V.I*, cat.1-2, 4-15, 18, 20 (Severina). Zenobia minted coins as an *augusta* between 271 and 274, but as the 'Queen of Palmyra' alongside a declaration of independence from Rome. Her accession to power was therefore somewhat different from that of previous *augustae*. It is certainly telling that she chose to appropriate Roman indicators – title, dress, symbols, reverse figures, and the actual practice of minting – of power: *RIC V.I,* cat.1-2.

[29] Fejfer, *Roman Portrait*, pp.347-9, for a discussion on the wearing of jewellery. Although there is material evidence for women wearing jewellery, it was not represented in portraiture until the end of the third century. Even then, jewellery only tended to appear in private, normally funerary, contexts.

[30] The laureate type only comes from the mint of Thessaloniki; *RIC VI,* cat.33-4 (Thessaloniki).

empresses of the early third century.[31] This suggests an attempt at an association between Valeria and these earlier *augustae*, some of whom were also awarded the title of *mater castrorum,* like Valeria.[32]

When discussing later Venus coin types, Angelova shows how the two main traits of Venus – Genetrix and Victrix – became intertwined after the Antonine period and thus images of the goddess imply 'a connection between Venus's roles as mother and as victory-bringer'.[33] She examines a type issued in Fausta's name with Venus on the reverse, to indicate the importance of dynastic succession; Constantine's marriage to Fausta, as the daughter of Maximian, was politically expedient for him, despite the later difficulty he would face in his relationship with his new father-in-law and brother-in-law. While Angelova focuses on the single type produced under Constantine's reign (dated to 307-8), instead she might have looked at Valeria.[34] All of Valeria's forty-six coin types are paired with the victorious Venus, and so her image is consistently associated with this traditional, divine representation of both progenitor and victory of the Romans. If this emphatic iconography – including

---

[31] Cornelia Salonina in P. H. Webb, *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol V, Part II: Probus to Amandus* (London, 1962): *RIC V.II,* cat.53-4 (Salonina); Julia Domna in H. Mattingly & E. A. Sydenham, *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol IV, Part I: Pertinax to Geta* (London, 1962): *RIC IV.I*, cat.580, 887 (Septimus Severus). This is not quite comparable, however, as the exact pose of Venus is not seen on other reverse types. The Julia Domna cat.580, 887 types are the closest, but the legend does not match.

[32] As well as being an *augusta*, Galeria Valeria was also given the title of *mater castrorum*, and it is likely that she was the last person to hold this title: Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, p.84. This title had been awarded to – and then advertised numismatically by – at least two empresses in third century: Julia Domna, *RIC IV,* cat.563a-b and 880-1 (Septimius Severus) in base metal; Julia Mamaea, *RIC IV,* cat.689-90 (Severus Alexander), though it was first awarded to Faustina Major in the latter half of the second century.

[33] Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, p.90.

[34] While Angelova's discussion of the Venus types is interesting, her focus on the coin of Fausta is difficult to understand being that it belongs to a single type at the beginning of Fausta and Constantine's union: Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, p.90; *RIC VI,* cat.756 (Treveri) – the Venus in this instance is Venus Felix. Angelova also does not make the point that this coin, paired with the knowledge of the tradition of couples taking their vows in front of the Venus Felix statue in Rome, could be a reflection of their new union.

the laurel wreath, well known for its association with triumphs – is viewed with the titles of *augusta* and *mater castrorum* too, Valeria's importance, particularly for Galerius, as a visible figure in the political hierarchy becomes clear. As the courts of the tetrarchy were 'peripatetic and militaristic', leaving little space for public roles for imperial women, we can see the representations of Valeria here as taking advantage of a liminal space; that between the idealised imperial woman and the all-important military victory, so often used by emperors in their own representations.[35] The slow appropriation of more masculine traits by the empress over this period is shown clearly here, highlighting through several elements the imperial image as one of victory.[36]

It has been argued convincingly that, though emperors would place their sons on their coins to indicate and bolster a line of succession, Galerius was keen to use his wife's image because of the familial link to the founder of the tetrarchic system.[37] This could help to ascertain why through this period, very few women, other than Galeria Valeria, were to be consistently found on coins until 317-8: the familial links of previous generations of emperors had broken down, and marriages between allies were few and far between until the tetrarchy.[38] Her idealised image and consistent iconography on the coinage promoted the idea that Galeria Valeria was the link between rulers in an

[35] Harries, *Imperial Rome*, p.255.
[36] Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, pp.185-6. After 383, Flaccilla's numismatic image especially underlines this transition; she wears the *paludamentum*, or *chlamys*, originally the military costume of the emperor, and which had become 'part of the standard uniform of the empress'.
[37] James, 'Ghosts in the Machine', p.101.
[38] Galeria Valeria's importance in the tetrarchic scheme can also be seen in the manner of her death. She and her mother Prisca were executed by Licinius after the death of Galerius and the offer of marriage by a rival tetrarch, Maximinus Daza. See J. Harries, 'The Empresses' Tale, AD 300-360', in C. Harrison, C. Humfress & I. Sandwell (eds.), *Being Christian in Late Antiquity: A Festschrift for Gillian Clark* (Cambridge, 2014), pp.197-214, pp.199-200, wherein Harries explores the threat implied by and subsequent danger for imperial women during this period.

increasingly unstable period around 308, just as Octavia, the first woman represented on Roman coins over four centuries ago, was for Mark Antony and Octavian. This and the use of imperial titles, as well as the connection to the partners of the early third-century emperors, shows how Galeria Valeria's image created the perception of stability, as well as showcasing the legitimacy of Galerius as belonging to the ranks of the tetrarchs and as a ruler in his own right.

1.1.3 The Coins of Helena and Fausta

Several years later during Constantine's reign, coins of differing denominations were struck in Helena's name and were widely minted, following traditional Roman stylistic conventions; the obverse contained an image of the empress in profile bust and the reverse portrayed a personification, which would convey a message in relation to the empire. These coins had the legend 'FL HELENA AVGUSTA' encircling her profile: her name Helena, and her newly elevated rank of *augusta* (fig.1.9).[39] The 'FL' refers to Flavia, a praenomen and matronymic title.[40] It is likely that this name was awarded to Helena at the same time as the title of *augusta*; it does not appear on her earlier coins from c.317-18. It next appeared on the coins of Aelia Flavia Flaccilla, *augusta* (379-386) who also had the praenomen Aelia, which was taken up by several successive empresses and other imperial women in the fifth and sixth

[39] *RIC VII,* cat.53, 116. I thank the Barber Institute of Fine Arts for allowing me access to their large collection of Byzantine coins, specifically those of Helena in this instance.
[40] As Antony Kaldellis discussed in a paper at a workshop on 'Dynasty' (Birmingham, 2018), Flavia is a matronymic title that has not recently been studied but which has a rich history of use in the Late Antique and Imperial Roman period.

centuries.[41] Comparatively, Flavius, the masculine form, as a praenomen was used by successive emperors from Constantine the Great in an unbroken line until Constantine III (641), who did not seem to take the name in his four-month reign.[42] The personification on the reverse was framed by the message that the figure represented – for Helena, this message was 'SECVRITAS REIPUBLICAE', the 'security for the republic'. These coins, intertwining the image of Helena with the image of Securitas, created a message that, by providing Constantine for the empire, Helena had provided an heir who was going to keep the empire secure and protected – she was responsible and necessary for the empire's current state.[43] As has already been discussed, linking noble women with personifications associated with the well-being of the empire, especially in coinage, was a long-standing Roman tradition and was a commonly used trope in earlier years, since the beginning of the office of empress.[44] Fausta, for example, had two different types of coins minted in her name with the reverse bearing the personifications and messages of 'SALVS' and 'SPES'; her image was interwoven with messages of 'safety' and 'hope' for the Republic, messages which had been conveyed alongside elite Roman women for hundreds of years (fig.1.10).[45]

---

[41] It was also awarded to Fausta at the same time, and then later to Helena and Theodora in their posthumous coins (337). Aelia Flaccilla in J. W. E. Pearce, *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol IX: Valentinian I – Theodosius I, AD 364-395* (London, 1968): *RIC IX*, cat.48 (Constantinople) for her first *solidi* with these titles. For discussion on the praenomen Aelia: James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.127-8. The last use of Aelia was during the tenure of Ino-Anastasia.

[42] An equivalent cognate does not seem to have been developed in the Greek nomenclature after the official language change in the seventh century. The last emperor to take Flavius was probably Justinian II: see B. Salway, 'What's in a Name? A Survey of Roman Onomastic Practice from c.700 BC to AD 700', *Journal of Roman Studies* 84 (1994), pp.124-45, for further discussion.

[43] Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', p.577.

[44] For further information on Roman conventions of this type, see the introductory pages.

[45] *RIC VII*, cat.205 (Siscia); Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', p.576.

Arguments have been made concerning the seniority of the two empresses: as the current wife of the emperor, was Fausta of a higher status than Helena, and can we see this reflected in the coinage? There are certainly noticeable differences between the iconography on their coins: the personifications on the reverse represented different elements, and their hairstyles were consistently different – Fausta was shown with a simpler, waved bun, whereas Helena consistently wore a flat, jewelled diadem, with her hair elaborately wrapped around. However, it is likely that, rather than seniority, these differences were representing the fulfilment of a range of female roles and virtues that had come to be expected within the imperial family – security, fecundity, hope, joy. These coins were thus creating definitive, stable types that could be easily recognised, almost like the creation of a brand, a cognitive association resonating in the social memory of the empire: that of the dutiful mother who had provided children, and that of the wife who brought with her the promise for the future, both in their own roles securing the empire.

The base metal *follis* of Helena were numerous and issued all over the empire; extant coins originated in almost all the major mints, from London to Constantinople, and Trier to Alexandria, as is indicated in the below table (Table.1). That her image was so widespread is significant as it tells a present-day audience that an image of the empress was appropriate to use in this sphere of public dissemination, alongside the distribution of the messages conveyed and associated with the image and the coin which it was on, which was then spread to every corner of the empire.

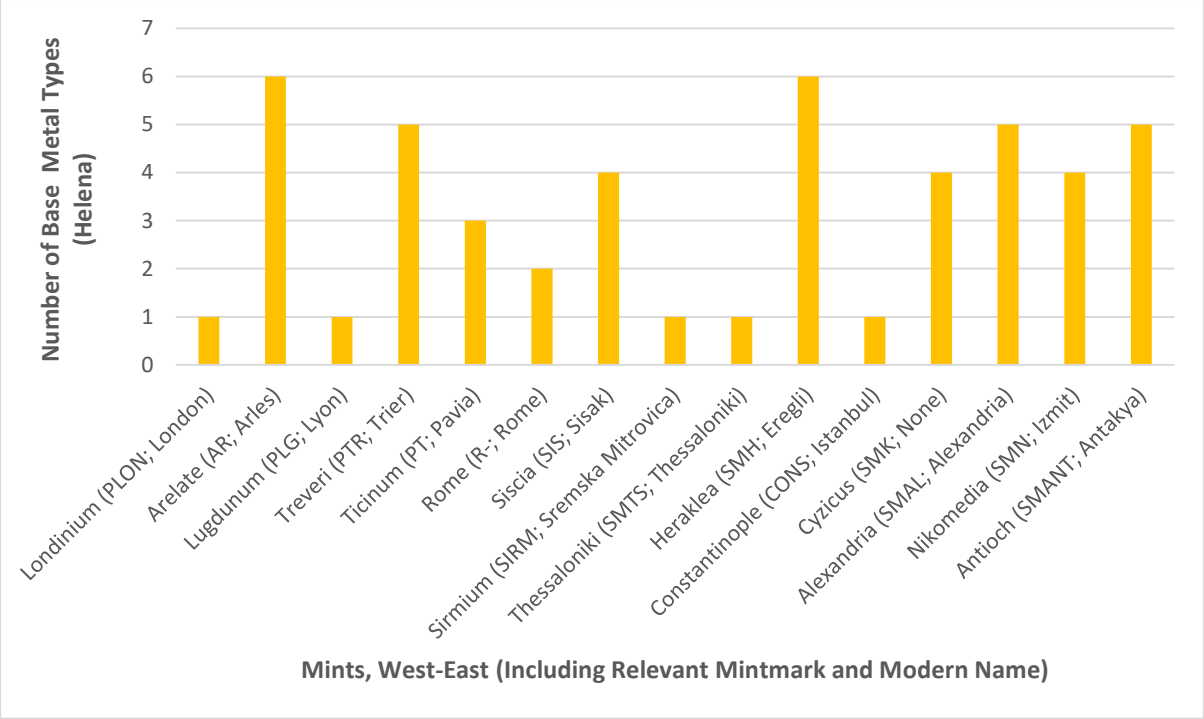


Table.1. Distribution of Base Metal Types of Helena throughout the Empire, 320s.[46]

Solidi were also issued in both Helena and Fausta's names (fig.1.11; 1.12), which kept to the same patterns as previously described, but these items are preserved in fewer numbers. This could be because they are no longer extant due to their worth as gold objects and were thus re-purposed, or that they were not as commonly used – unlike the *folles* of 'market transactions' – or perhaps because they were normally reserved for the image of the emperor.[47] In terms of number, however, what can be seen is that between 324 and 326, where Helena's coins were issued, so too were Fausta's, consistently.[48] With Fausta's fall from grace and subsequent death in 326, it was Helena's image by far which was the most prolific imperial female image.[49] Although there were no shortage of other imperial women – Constantia, Theodora, and Constantine's

[46] All information has been taken from *RIC VII*.
[47] Brubaker & Tobler, 'Gender and Money', p.572, have discussed this issue.
[48] *RIC VII*, cat.116, 137, 205, 206, 209, 264, 266-7, 325, 330, 383, 385, 387, 446-50, 475, 514 519, 551, 552, 571, 613, 615, 621, 624, 647-50, 689-90, 709.
[49] *RIC VII*, cat.212-3, 268-70, 387, 453, 553-4, 557, 626, 651, 691, 710-1.

two daughters, Helena and Constantina, both of whom should have reached their majority by this point – it was Constantine's mother, identified with the security of the empire, who was continually represented. The connotation here is that the continuation of Helena's numismatic representation underlined this idea of security; further change after the upheaval of the death of the heir and the wife of the emperor would have undermined the message that was encapsulated therein. That it was Helena, and not a younger, more able woman, who travelled to the eastern provinces also adds to this point: her journey further crystallised the perception of her continuous representation of her imperial position and as the security of the empire. Helena's advanced age at this juncture must have made travel difficult, and thus must indicate a strong impetus behind such a journey.[50]

1.1.4 Posthumous Coins

Helena's image was also used posthumously on coinage, after Constantine's death in May 337. The events after his death have caused much controversy for Late Antique historians, as the circumstances around the accession of Constantine's sons to power and the sudden deaths of their male relatives are complex. Before delving into the discussion surrounding Helena's

[50] That there was a strong impetus behind this journey is also the view taken by Drijvers who argues that the journey was taken to shore up the eastern provinces generally due to Constantine's increasing unpopularity and to distract for the problems plaguing his reign at that time: Drijvers, 'Helena Augusta, the Cross', pp.140-1. Whereas Lenski argues that Helena was escaping from court intrigue to restore her imperial power as a patron in Jerusalem, he does not take into account the fact that the journey was much more extensive than just Jerusalem: Lenski, 'Empresses in the Holy Land', pp.114-5. She was also joined by Eutropia, Fausta's mother, in 327, who was also responsible for building work being carried out at Mamre. As the wife and mother to those who had been executed by Constantine, Lenski is much more convincing when discussing Eutropia and later empresses like Aelia Eudokia (421-60), that travel to the Holy Land could prove a safe haven: Lenski, 'Empresses in the Holy Land', pp.116-8.

posthumous coins, the scene must be set for the summer months of 337. Burgess has convincingly argued that Constantine had attempted to create a new tetrarchy in the event of his death, brought together by familial ties rather than relying on marital ones; this would consist of his three sons, Constantine II (337-40), Constantius II (337-61), and Constans I (337-50), and his half-nephew, Dalmatius.[51] All four were titled as *caesar* by 335 – though, of course, Constantine II had held the position since he was a baby in 317 and Constantius II since 324 – and appeared as such on the coinage across the empire. Burgess suggests that the promotion of Dalmatius caused a great deal of tension, evidenced by the coinage production of the 'home mints' of the sons of Constantine – Trier, Rome, and Antioch – which did not mint coins in precious metals in the name of Dalmatius during the period between 335-7.[52] After Constantine's death, this planned tetrarchy did not come to fruition. Instead, that tension manifested itself in a series of murders, including the *caesar* Dalmatius, his brother, father, uncle, and cousin: Burgess suggests that it was Constantius II who had them murdered, as soon as early June, less than a month after Constantine's death, his primary motive being the potential

[51] R. W. Burgess, 'The Summer of Blood: The "Great Massacre" of 337 and the Promotion of the Sons of Constantine', *DOP* 62 (2008), pp.5-51, pp.8-10. Burgess points out that Constantine's half-brothers were invited to the capital and then awarded titles in the early 330s, with the intention that they would take on advisory roles for the four young *caesars* after Constantine's death. The two branches of the family were also pulled closer by marriage – Constantius II to the daughter of Julius Constantius, and Constantia to Hannibalianus, with further marriages planned. These ties are indicated in Appendix 1.1. Burgess suggests that Constantine II and Constantius II were likely intended as the *augusti* in this arrangement, with the two younger men designated as *caesars*. Dalmatius' brother, Hannibalianus, was awarded other titles (*rex* and *rex regum et gentium Ponticarum*).

[52] Burgess, 'Summer of Blood', pp.21-2. However, there are *solidi* types issued from a variety of mints, despite not being from the 'home mints': *RIC VII,* cat.247 (Siscia); 213 (Thessaloniki); 89, 98, 102, 113 (Constantinople), as well as base metal types minted throughout the empire. Additionally, Antioch and Trier, for instance, mint very few coins of the newer *caesar* Constans in this same period, so this point may not be as salient as Burgess suggests: *RIC VII*, cat.104 (Antioch); 575-6 (Treveri). This move of proclaiming the son of a potential rival power base as a *caesar* and placing him on the coins was mirrored in the treatment of Licinius in 317.

threat to the power of Constantine's sons.[53] The sons met in early September and were all promoted to *augustus*, carving the empire up between themselves – Constantine II to the west, Constantius II to the east, and Constans in between them.

After the death of Constantine, two new types of base metal coins appeared, and were minted across the empire. One type held the portrait bust of Helena on the obverse, while the reverse featured the words 'PAX PVBLICA', 'Peace for the Public', with the personification of Peace standing, holding a branch and transverse sceptre (fig.1.13).[54] Wherever these coins were issued, so too was a new type of coin. This depicted the bust of Theodora with 'PIETAS ROMANA', struck upon the reverse, alongside the matching personification of Pietas, portrayed standing and carrying a child at her breast (fig.1.14).[55] Theodora had never had coins minted in her name before, and she too had died some years earlier. Despite the lack of veil and *divus* legend that were characteristic of posthumous coins, the dative of the legend likely indicates that they were created after the deaths of the subjects.[56]

---

[53] Burgess, 'Summer of Blood', pp.42-3. Burgess argues this based on a close reading of the sources, which slowly change their story over time (initially a mutinous army is blamed for the murders), numismatic evidence and a reconstruction of events based on travel times. He also notes that Constantius would have had a good role model for familial executions: Constantine is known for having being involved in the deaths of his eldest son, second wife, father-in-law, two brothers-in-law and young nephew, Licinius.

[54] J. P. C. Kent, *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol VIII: The Family of Constantine I, AD 337-364* (London, 1981): *RIC VIII*, cat.42, 47, 55, 63-4, 78, 90 (Treveri); 27, 53 (Rome); 33-5, 38, 48-9 (Constantinople).

[55] *RIC VIII*, cat.43, 48, 56, 65, 79, 91 (Treveri); 28, 54 (Rome); 36, 50-1, (Constantinople). Though Pietas is a particularly common accompaniment on the coins of earlier empresses, this is the first time that this exact legend was used. The most recent coinage to feature Pietas on the reverse were the coins of the tetrarchy, including Theodora's father, Maximian, who is also referred to via her name: *RIC VI* cat.72b, 74b (Treveri). Though the sources are not in completely in agreement, Barnes argues that Theodora was the natural-born daughter of Maximian (who was also the father of Fausta): T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA, 1981), pp.33-4. The coins are almost exactly the same on the obverse, with the only difference being that of headdress type, minor differences in legend break, and, obviously, name.

[56] Burgess, 'Summer of Blood', p.22.

The production and purpose of these coins is up for debate. Brubaker and Tobler have used the argument that these coins were struck by the rival branches of the Constantinian house: Constantine's sons produced the Helena types and the descendants of Constantius Chlorus and Theodora produced the Theodora types.[57] They suggested that the Helena types were not only encouraging peace during a fractious time, but underlined Helena's status, and thus their own, to the rival claimants and their supporters;[58] their grandmother was an empress and their family lineage was imperial. The Theodora type matched the promotional coins of Helena and championed the cause of her line, denoting imperial female power and piety, the association of both benefitting her descendants. Brubaker and Tobler argue that whereas the Helena coins represented a 'peaceful continuation' of the new, Christian order, the Theodora coins supported a return to older Roman, non-Christian piety – it was a 'contest between new and old values', as well as being implicit tokens of support for their respective familial branches.[59]

However, Burgess suggests that, due to his argument that the murders took place almost immediately – leaving no time for there to be 'rival issues' – the coins must have been minted by Constantine's sons; Constantine II was pinpointed particularly, as he had his 'home mint' at Trier where much of these were produced.[60] Dated by the changing mintmarks on the coins, they

---

[57] *RIC VIII*, pp.3-5. This is broadly the view taken by scholars looking at this period: Leadbetter, 'The Illegitimacy of Constantine', pp.80-1; Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', p.577.
[58] Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', pp.577-8.
[59] Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', p.578. The titles, FL (Flavia) and AVG (*augusta*), are also used on Theodora's coins as well as MAX (Maximiana), which referred to her father, the Emperor Maximian, *augustus* of the west during the tetrarchy. There is no evidence of Theodora being awarded the title of *augusta* before the production of these coins, so it may have been awarded posthumously.
[60] Burgess, 'Summer of Blood', pp.22-3. The coins produced at other mints were the result of Constantine persuading his brothers to follow his lead. He suggests that the smaller

continued to be produced until 340.[61] Burgess' overall thought on the production of these coins was that it was a public act of atonement by the brothers, led specifically by Constantine II, for the massacre: Theodora, in her association with the maternal figure of Pietas, represented the dead members of her family in an act of expiation, and Helena represented the living sons and the promise of a return to imperial peace through their rule.[62] However, there are some unaddressed issues here. Even if most of the coins were minted at Trier, it makes little sense for there to be both an immediate campaign of *damnatio memoriae* against that side of the family and also many base metal – and thus widely seen – coins entering into circulation with the face of the mother and grandmother of those killed on them.[63] The two are quite incompatible; if responsible for the massacre and pursuing a policy of *damnatio*, Constantius would have been very unlikely to mint these from Constantinople. The dating on which this interpretation rests is also somewhat problematic – much relies on the calculation of travel speeds, and leaves little room for error.

Whereas an in-depth assessment of the dating is beyond the remit of this thesis, the images on the coins themselves are still useful to examine.[64] The use of coins as promotional tools during or after a succession struggle shows how

---

amount from these other mints indicate the brothers' reluctance to mint 'subversive' coins, which were contrary to the 'official account' of a mutinous army: Burgess, 'Summer of Blood', p.24.

[61] Burgess, 'Summer of Blood', p.23. Burgess suggests that production stops with the death of Constantine II in 340.

[62] Burgess, 'Summer of Blood', pp.25, 42-3.

[63] Burgess shows in his work that there was an immediate period of *damnatio memoriae* that did not relax for two decades: Burgess, 'Summer of Blood', pp.13-4.

[64] The production of these coin types would make much more sense if produced by Constantine when he was attempting to more closely bind the two strands of their family, represented by Helena and Theodora as the grandmothers of the *caesars*, to create close family rule, strongly associated with peace and piety.

important they could be in distributing messages to a wide audience in a 'visual contest' or in shoring up those loose ends. Attaching the reputation and memory of deceased imperial women alongside the attached messages was helpful to their cause, thus explaining why their images were used, and that it was appropriate to do so.[65] Of further interest here is that the image of Fausta was not used. Either her reputation was so damaged or obsolete – showing the success of *damnatio memoriae* campaigns – or Helena's reputation had grown to such an extent – suggested by the prominence of her image on coins, statuary, and of her later life in contemporary texts – that it was more useful for her image to appear to help achieve the intended message.

1.1.5 Medallions

Helena also had her image on medallions. On one gold medallion that is now in the Cabinet des Medailles, Paris, she was depicted in a very similar fashion to the base metal coins mentioned previously. Her hair is of a similar type – parted in the middle, often in two plaits, which were then carried up to encircle from the forehead to the crown of the head, with the jewelled diadem.[66] Representations of Helena in both coins and a few extant medallions showed this type of hairstyle, with several variations, which, for the next two centuries, remained fashionable for elite women.[67] She may also be portrayed on a bronze medallion that shows an imperial male and female beneath a Chi Rho, with three younger busts beneath them: this has been identified as Constantine's

[65] Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', p.578.
[66] M. Emmanuel, 'Hairstyles and Headdresses of Empresses, Princesses and Ladies of the Aristocracy in Byzantium', *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias* 12 (1994), pp.113-20, pp.113-4.
[67] Emmanuel, 'Hairstyles and Headdresses', p.113.

family, with the female identified both as Fausta and Helena (fig.1.52).[68] Kleiner suggests that it could be Fausta and Helena conflated; I would agree that, regardless of who the empress is supposed to be, it is important to note that the female figure here is displayed as the empress, appearing alongside Constantine, his young family and a symbol of Christian piety.[69]

In these coins and medallion, Helena was depicted as draped, with a double-strand necklace and a simple diadem; in later years, the single jewelled strip of Helena, and also rarely of Fausta, developed into the more elaborately decorated hairstyle of Aelia Flaccilla and other later empresses until it reaches its nexus in the sixth century with Theodora. At this time, however, there was little to differentiate between the image of the empress and the image of an elite woman, or even between two empresses;[70] it was the title and the following inscription that identified the image as Helena, and the important medium that holds their image. Another potential image of Helena on a medallion is one issued by Crispus in 324 (fig.1.51): the obverse represents his bust and the legend identifies him as *caesar*.[71] The reverse legend reads 'FELIX PROGENIES CONSTANTINI AVG', while two imperial figures, identified as Crispus and Constantine II, stand shaking hands, with a woman stood between them, her

[68] The medallion was found in 1922 in the Loire, France, and is now held in Musée Dobrée, Nantes, inv.923.3.1. The female figure is wearing a jewelled diadem, indicating that she is imperial. Drijver's agrees with Wegner's assertion that this medallion portrays Fausta and her three sons with Constantine: Dijvers, *Helena Augusta*, pp.202-3. The museum where it is held, as well as H. P. L'Orange, claims that it must be Helena: H. P. L'Orange, *Das spätantike Herrscherbild von Diokletian bis zu dem Konstantin-Söhnen 284-361 n. Chr.* (Berlin, 1984), p.123. The museum focuses on the Christian symbol and Helena's association with Christianity. There is also some debate on the three young busts – the left figure has occasionally been identified as Constantia.
[69] Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*, pp.442-3.
[70] Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, pp.339-41
[71] This medallion is now held at the British Museum, inv.1896,0608.102; *RIC VII,* cat.442 (Treveri). The obverse legend reads 'FL IVL CRISPVS CAES' and shows the bust of Crispus wearing the imperial mantle and holding an eagle-topped sceptre, symbols normally associated with consuls of the Late Antique period (a position which Crispus held in 324, with Constantine II).

hands on their shoulders. While this female figure could be Helena, as the 'neutral' connection between the half-brothers, Harries argues that this issue is in reaction to Fausta's fears that Crispus represented a threat to her sons: the scene therefore represents a reconciliation or settlement, and that the female figure therefore must be Fausta.[72] At this juncture, it was unlikely that women portrayed on this type of media were not related to the *augustus*, unless, of course, they took the form of personifications. Although these images are idealised versions of their subjects, it is crucial to note that an image, which was identified as such by its positioning and trappings, even if it looked nothing like her physiognomically, of Helena, and indeed Fausta, was disseminated on all denominations of coins and, therefore, through all the layers of society.[73]

After the imperial female relatives of Constantine, there were no coins minted in the name of living imperial females for nearly fifty years. The next empress to be numismatically represented was Aelia Flaccilla in 383.[74] As this was also true of the title *augusta*, it has been suggested that Theodosian empresses were awarded these honours to associate their imperial women with Helena, and thus hark back to the prestige of Constantine's dynasty.[75] Pulcheria, *augusta* (414-453) and sister of Theodosios II (408-450), has often been thought to have undertaken an ideological campaign to associate herself with Helena.[76] As well as her euergetism, specifically in relation to the patronage of religious buildings, she – or, perhaps, Theodosios – had two types

[72] Harries, 'The Empresses' Tale', pp.204-5. Harries makes the comparison that Crispus, the son of a *augustus* (Constantine) and a concubine (Minervina), might threaten the position of the legitimate children of that same *augustus*, just as Constantine himself did to the legitimate children of Theodora and Constantius Chlorus. She also links this image to the troubles that plague the court in 326 and end in the deaths of Crispus and Fausta.
[73] Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena', p.58.
[74] *RIC IX*, cat.48 (Constantinople) for the first *solidi* type of Flaccilla.
[75] Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena', p.60.
[76] Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena', p.60.

of coins minted which alluded to Helena, with crosses stamped on them to draw connotations with the legend of the True Cross and Helena, which had taken root by the late fourth century (fig.1.15).[77] These actions and her reputation for piety eventually resulted in Pulcheria being named as 'new Helena' by the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and her new husband, Marcian, named as the 'new Constantine'.[78] Thus, even at such an early stage, we can see the pious reputation that Helena had garnered; one that later women could make use of, as a point of reference that others could easily recognise – clearly Helena had become cemented into the cultural memory of Constantinople as an imperial paragon of piety.

1.1.6 Numismatic Titles

That Helena was recorded as an official *augusta,* both on coinage and in textual evidence,[79] is also worthy of note. Out of the forty-one empresses from the fourth to the eighth century, only twenty-seven are recorded as being acclaimed as *augusta*.[80] Whilst it has been suggested in the past that this honorific was awarded in relation to the birth of imperial children, specifically sons and therefore heirs, James has argued that this may not be the only reason why this title might be awarded.[81] There are several examples which

[77] Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', pp.579-80. As discussed previously, this was a trend that could be seen to take root with the funeral oration written by Ambrose of Milan and builds in momentum from this point.
[78] *Concilium Universale Chalcedonensis* 1, ed. E. Schwartz, *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum II* (Berlin, 1933), trans. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, p.216: *AOC II*, 1, 2, 155.
[79] Eusebius, III.47.2. He notes that she was acclaimed by all, including the military, as *augusta imperatrix*.
[80] James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.119-22.
[81] James, *Empresses and Power*, p.119, for example, was one of several who have argued that the title of *augusta* was not awarded for the successful birth of a child alone. Hill shows that being married to the emperor was not even a prerequisite in later periods; as illustrated by *BOC I*, the crowning ceremony for an *augusta* could take place before the marriage ceremony: Hill, *Imperial Women*, p.103. For those who argue for childbirth as the

demonstrate that this was not the case: Pulcheria was not only the sister of the emperor but had dedicated herself as a virgin in honour of Christ, and yet she was still created an *augusta* in 414; in the sixth century, both Lupicina-Euphemia (518-523/4) and Theodora (527-548) bore no children but were made *augustae* regardless.[82] Similarly, Helena gave birth to Constantine around 272, yet she was not instantly named *augusta* upon his accession in 306, but nearly two decades later. The same can be seen of Fausta, whose first son and heir of her union with Constantine was born in 317; she was not awarded the title of *augusta* until 324, alongside Helena.

Instead, it seems clear, as James has argued, that the title of *augusta* was awarded to imperial women at moments of political importance; Helena could have been elevated at this time in an attempt at 'shoring up' the imperial family after the success of Constantine over Licinius, and especially in the events that followed this year, with the obscure deaths of Crispus and Fausta.[83] Titles denoted the person's status in the structure of the Byzantine hierarchy and were used to describe 'the body politic of the empress'; it conveyed her significance to others, and established her as a public figure with imperial standing.[84] Thus, this title was significant and by using it, and being called

impetus for elevation, see Holum, *Theodosian Empresses,* pp.29-34, for the title of *augusta* as a celebration of child-bearing, and D. Missiou, 'Über die institutionelle Rolle der byzantinischen Kaiserin', *JÖB* 32.2 (1982), pp.489-98, who suggests that a child was a prerequisite in Middle Byzantium. Garland sits on the fence and declares that the title of *augusta* was either granted on their marriage to the emperor or on the birth of their first child: Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, p.2.

[82] Pulcheria may have been elevated due to her relative seniority in age, compared to the new emperor. It has been argued that she may have been a regent for Theodosios: see Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*. The husbands of both Lupicina-Euphemia and Theodora were not natural-born successors to imperial power, and thus the title may have been awarded quickly, to be perceived as legitimate.

[83] James, *Empresses and Power*, p.119. As was mentioned previously, Fausta was linked with the downfall of Crispus, her step-son, and was executed, her memory was condemned, alongside Crispus', and largely omitted from contemporary sources: Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation*, pp.221-3.

[84] James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.118, 125.

augusta in both word and image, Helena was being portrayed as occupying a position of power in the empire; a steadfast ally to Constantine in a time of transition for the elite and the empire.

1.2 Cameos

Scholars have also discussed the possibility that Helena was represented on cameos. In the same vein as statuary, though arguments can be made for identifications based on groupings, stylistic choices, and the skill of the carver, there is no clear certainty: no cameos that are thought to be from the Constantinian period, for example, were inscribed with the names of the subjects depicted. How successful arguments of identification are will be examined in this section, as will what the iconography and intended audience might suggest.

Roman and Late Antique cameos were a luxury and yet difficult medium of representation. Cameos were usually intricately carved figural representations – of divine, posthumous, or living figures – on semi-precious stones, likely intended for the imperial court, due to their costliness and hence their status as a luxury object. Thus, they would have had a limited yet elite audience; the language of the iconography displayed, as well as the costliness and technical skill needed to produce them, would have been observed by the imperial court – their allies and their rivals – and hence this medium of representation would have been most significant, both when created and for the present-day observer. Cameos were at their most popular throughout the Julio-Claudian dynasty, undergoing a revival during the fourth century, after which

they fell out of fashion.[85] The circumstances of these fourth-century gems, however, are a point of contention for scholars: were they created under the Constantinian court, were they Julio-Claudian cameos that were later re-carved, or have they been simply incorrectly attributed by historians?[86]

Bruns and then Zadoks-Josephus Jitta, for instance, convincingly argue that the Leiden Cameo (fig.1.16) represented family members from the Constantinian house, though they differ on the precise identity of the figures. The cameo shows a chariot pulled by centaurs, trampling enemies before them, with an emperor and his wife – in the guises of Jupiter and Juno Pronuba or, as Zadoks-Josephus Jitta argues, Dionysius and Ariadne – in the carriage, a small child between them, with another woman behind the group. A Victory overhead moves to crown the emperor with a laurel wreath; based on this iconographic choice, and others, Bruns first argued for a Constantinian date, due to close similarities between it and the overhead Victories on the Arch of Constantine in Rome – the 'swimming attitude'.[87] Therefore, the couple in the carriage have been identified as the newly-weds, Constantine and Fausta – largely due to the representation of Juno Pronuba or Ariadne – perhaps even as a celebration of their marriage, with the child suggested to be Crispus, as the son from a previous marriage – thus, the slight separation. If this identification of the figures as Constantine and his family is correct, it begs the question as to why Zadoks-Josephus Jitta identified the female figure behind the chariot as

---

[85] Elsner, 'Perspectives in Art', p.269.
[86] See G. Bruns, *Staatskameen des 4. Jahrhunderts nach Christi Geburt* (Berlin, 1948); A. Zadoks-Josephus Jitta, 'Imperial Messages in Agate, II', *Bulletin van de Vereeniging tot Bevordering der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving* 41 (1966), pp.91-104, for arguments regarding these gems as fourth-century creations. Conversely, see J. Spier, 'Late Antique Cameos', in M. Henig & M. Vickers (eds.), *Cameos in Context: The Benjamin Zucker Lectures* (Oxford, 1993), pp.43-56, for arguments that first-century products were recarved in the fourth.
[87] Bruns, *Staatskameen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, pp.8-16.

Claudia, Constantine's grandmother.[88] Claudia was the daughter of Crispus the Elder, who in turn was the brother of Claudius II Gothicus. As such, Zadoks-Josephus Jitta suggests that Claudia was depicted to symbolise this imperial, dynastic link.[89] By pointing at the son of the emperor and heir to the empire, the figure of Claudia served as a reminder of the imperial family's illustrious past and its connections to past emperors – a hereditary claim to imperial power.

This, however, seems to be a stretch. While Constantine did link himself to Claudius II Gothicus, he did it in much more obvious ways: the minting of *divus* coins, for instance, complete with identifying legend.[90] I would argue that it is much more likely to represent Helena. As with her numismatic representations, wherein Helena was associated with the 'security' of the empire, here Helena was being portrayed as the progenitor of Constantine's family and its continuation. Additionally, Crispus, as the son from his first marriage, needed to be clearly linked into the family. If I am correct, we see Helena, Constantine's mother, pointing at Crispus, indicating clearly the familial links between them all. The celebration of Constantine's new marriage does not leave out his son and heir. As this cameo may have been displayed in the imperial court, this would likely have been a decorative reminder to the elite audience of Constantine's intention to have his son take over as his heir, even if that did not come to pass.

---

[88] Zadoks-Josephus Jitta, 'Imperial Messages', p.93.
[89] Zadoks-Josephus Jitta, 'Imperial Messages', p.93. Crispus the Elder was the brother of Claudius Gothicus (268-270) from whom Constantine claimed descent. This was part and parcel of Constantine's project to publicly reify his own legitimacy: Leadbetter, 'The Illegitimacy of Constantine', pp.79-81.
[90] For an example of the types dated to 318, see *RIC VII,* cat.203 (Treveri). This dynastic connection was also proclaimed via a panegyric in 310: Leadbetter, 'The Illegitimacy of Constantine', pp.79-80.

1.3 Frescoes

The Cathedral of Trier (*Trierer Dom*) had its beginnings in the Constantinian period, as part of a complex of buildings. Despite the structure's purpose now, and its nineteenth-century name of 'Basilica', it is likely that it was initially built as an imperial reception chamber.[91] However, for the purposes of this case study, it is the substructure of the northern section of the Basilica which is of most interest, where the remains of a palatial complex can be found, unearthed after World War Two. The ceiling of one of the rooms – assumed to be a reception room –with a fresco painted on to it, partially survived: this fresco has been argued to be of a Constantinian date, and specifically to represent women of the imperial family and their virtues.[92] It has even been suggested that Helena was the patron of this building, and therefore one of the richly-decorated female figures represented within would doubtless be her.[93]

The building is thought to have belonged to a member of the Constantinian dynasty in part because it is so richly decorated; the frescoes are spilt into fifteen sections, contain four women overall and use the colour purple which would imply that the subjects are of an imperial background. They are also portrayed as nimbate, draped, wearing jewellery, and diadems, and are thus thought to have depicted imperial women, representing the prosperity of their dynasty. These two factors – the iconography and dating of the fresco –

[91] E. M. Wightman, *Roman Trier and the Treveri* (Chicago, IL, 1970), pp.103-8. It could certainly be the case that the Basilica was founded during Constantine's reign: there are similar type of stamped tiles used in other Constantinian foundations (i.e. Kastel Deutz), numismatic evidence that provides a *terminus post quem* of 305 and a possible textual reference from 310.
[92] See E. Simon, *Die konstantinischen Deckengemalde in Trier* (Mainz, 1986).
[93] There is little evidence to suggest that Helena was the specific patron, other than contextual circumstance and medieval tradition: Wightman, *Roman Trier*, p.59.

have led some to argue that it was Helena who was holding the jewellery box (fig.1.17), representing the 'hilaritas populi Romani' – as the joy of the Roman people – but it has also been argued that she could as easily be identified as the woman holding the *kantharos* (fig.1.18).[94]

However, without labels identifying these women, it is impossible to tell if specific identifications had been assigned to them. As will be discussed with statuary, while we can observe stylistic features and place the painting in within a specific chronology, as present-day observers we are not given enough information to assign an identity to the female figures. Rose has argued convincingly that the figures are 'unidentified and unidentifiable women wearing royal insignia', and they could just as easily be the personifications of the virtues of an empress, rather than the actual representations of the imperial woman of the Constantinian dynasty.[95] As these female figures were likely in a reception room, for receiving and entertaining guests, as well as their *clientes*, the audience would have at least been a limited, presumably to guests and those who had business with the family. As Rose points out, in other examples, particularly in Roman domestic scenes, the general figure of the Roman noble woman was used to indicate prosperity, especially with their luxury objects, and domestic harmony.[96] It is likely that the women depicted in this fresco do not portray Helena, or indeed any of the Constantinian women, though they certainly are imbued with specific female attributes, appropriate to the function of a reception room.

---

[94] Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, pp.26-7, provides an overview for the arguments for each identification.
[95] M. E. Rose, 'The Trier Ceiling: Power and Status on Display in Late Antiquity', *GR* 53.1 (2006), pp.93-109, p.108.
[96] Rose, 'The Trier Ceiling', p.109.

1.4 Statuary

Early statuary, unless it was inscribed or has been preserved with its base, has proven problematic to identify. Although these monumental images are usually dated according to hairstyle – as with coins, medallions, cameos and frescoes – it is often difficult to say with certainty if the female statue in question was an imperial woman, and then, furthermore, to link the figure commemorated with a known historical person. Though some historians identify unlabelled statues on the basis of physiognomic similarities with other acknowledged representations,[97] including coins and medallions, James has convincingly argued that this is an incorrect way to interpret statues of empresses: the images depicted what the person shown, or the commissioner, wanted the audience to see – these statues were idealised and therefore would not have been a replica of what the person shown actually looked like.[98] In addition to this, in the fourth century, images of noblewoman and the empress were almost indistinguishable, though this changes throughout the early Byzantine period, and empresses' iconography evolves into a much more recognisable and imperial style. This can be seen quite clearly when comparing the simply-dressed image of Helena, seen on coinage with little ornamentation apart from a simple diadem, with the opulent image of Theodora, displayed in the mosaic of San Vitale, Ravenna. One can certainly not confuse the sixth-

[97] This, of course, rings true for other types of statuary too. For an example of empress identification problems, see the arguments of similarities in style for the marble statuette from Cabinet des Médailles, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris: R. Delbrück, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantius Magnus bis zum Ende de Westreichs* (Berlin, 1933), who identifies the woman as Helena; J. D. Breckenridge, cat.20, in K. Weitzmann (ed.), *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, NY, 1979), pp.26-7, who suggests the statue be identified as Flaccilla, based on comparison with her coin types; and J-P. Sodini, in J. Durand (ed.), *Byzance: l'art byzantine dans les collections publiques françaises: Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1992), pp.36-7, who suggests Flaccilla or Pulcheria.
[98] James, *Empresses and Power*, p.35.

century Byzantine empress with a noble woman, as can be seen when compared with the noble women who surround Theodora in this mosaic. We see here an imperial stylistic shift which may be tracked in the development of artisanal production over these two centuries. However, this is made more difficult to comprehend as, when compared with earlier Roman periods, there was a dramatic decline in the production, or survival, of statuary in the fourth century and onwards.[99]

Therefore, although there may be imagery of Helena left extant, we cannot know for certain whether it was commissioned to represent her, or one of the number of other imperial women from this period. A bust of a Roman woman, which is now in Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, has been identified as Helena: however, as there is no diadem or any type of jewellery present on the bust, it would seem quite unlikely that it is actually an image of her (fig.1.19). This may also be the case with the statue head of a Late Roman woman, now at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (fig.1.20), who has been identified as either Fausta and Helena, or the statue head now held in the Museo Capitolino, Rome, (fig.1.21) which again has been identified as both Fausta and Helena; there is little evidence that would indicate that this was in fact Fausta, rather than Helena, or one of the other imperial women of this time.[100] The collection in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, holds a reclining statue that has similarly been identified as Helena (fig.1.22): though stylistically the statue lends itself well to the Constantinian period – the 'bulging' eyes and distinct eyebrows, for instance – there is little in the way of definitive evidence

[99] This was discussed in the introduction, but will also be discussed later in this chapter, examining both extant statue bases and textual records, to indicate the actual presence of statuary in Constantinople.
[100] Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*, p.408, for the statue head now held in Rome.

that this must be Helena.[101] What can be said instead, however, is that images of the imperial women of the Constantinian house were present and visible during this period.

1.5 Statue Bases

However, there are other materials extant in the historical record that indicate how prolific the image of Helena was throughout the empire.[102] Statue bases are often the only part of these public-facing representations that remains to us – the deliberate destruction of figural images, the reuse as spolia, the ravages of time, or the chance effects of natural happenstance (earthquakes, floods etc.) are just some of the myriad reasons that the figural statue may not have come down to us. As unfortunate as this is, statue bases can be incredibly useful sources of information, in ways that portraiture alone cannot. Specifically, those dedicated to Helena can indicate her status – her titles, the official descriptors of both her office and public identity – and the identity of those who were honouring her. There are at least twelve such bases in the historical record that reference Helena, though only five are still extant today.[103] As with the numismatic evidence examined, there are only two other

[101] Georgiou, *Cult of Flavia Iulia Helena*, pp.43-5, undertakes a stylistic comparison and overview of the statuary thought to be of Helena. Inv. n.171 for the Uffizi Gallery statue, which the institution still identifies, both in museum and official guide books, as Helena.
[102] See the AHRC project, led by the principal investigators R. R. R. Smith and Bryan Ward-Perkins, 'The Last Statues of Antiquity' (*LSA*) for an exploration of statues from the third to the seventh century, including records of inscriptions on statue bases for Helena. A publication followed, R. R. R. Smith & B. Ward-Perkins (eds.), *The Last Statues of Antiquity* (Oxford, 2016), as well as an online catalogue: http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/
[103] The locations of these statues bases are as follows: Pamphylia, Asia Minor, Side Museum Garden inv. 3272, *LSA* 262; Pamphylia, Side Museum, located in the agora next to the theatre, *LSA* 2098; Pamphylia, *CIG* 4349, *LSA 263*; Sicca Veneria, Tunisia, *CIL VII* 1633, *LSA* 1887; Salernum, Museo Archeologico, *LSA* 1847; Neapolis (Naples), *CIL X* 1483, *LSA* 1875; Neapolis (Naples) *CIL X* 1484, *LSA* 1876; Saepinum (modern day Altilia), *CIL IX* 2446, *LSA* 1751; Rome, *CIL VI* 1135, *LSA* 1261; Rome, *CIL VI* 36950 & p.4354, *LSA* 1540; Gerusalemme, Rome, *CIL VI* 1134, *LSA* 835. The twelfth example is an inscription originally

contemporary female figures who have comparative materials in this medium: both Fausta and Galeria Valeria have surviving statue bases, though in fewer numbers.[104] This, of course, falls into the same pattern as that of the coins; the difference in number is predicated on their relatively short tenure as *augustae*, and Fausta's subsequent downfall, while Helena remained in her position for several years, as well as having a high-ranking position before her elevation. This table takes into consideration the provenance of Helena's statue bases:

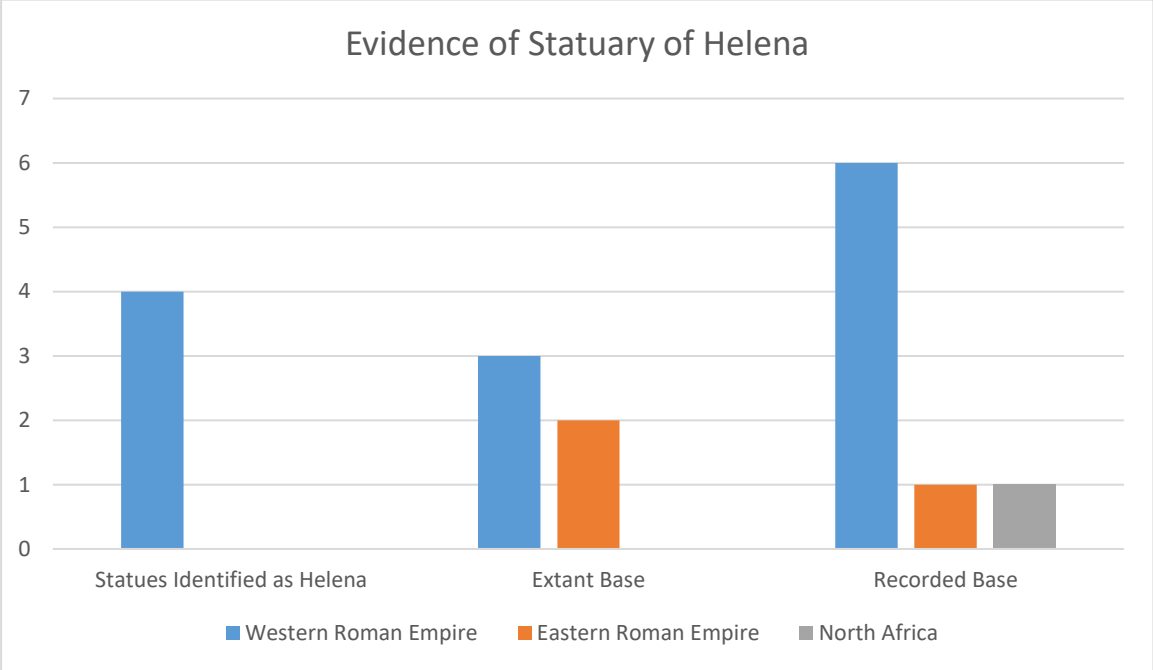


Table.2. Distribution of Evidence Focused on Statuary of Helena.

Straight away, it is apparent that one of the most significant aspects of this particular medium is the lack of its presence in the new capital, Constantinople. Largely the evidence comes from Rome and central-southern areas in Italy: Naples, Salerno and Saepinum (modern Altilia) specifically. The

dedicated to Fausta and changed to Helena likely after 326: Surrentum (Sorrento), Museo Correale di Terranova inv. 055, *LSA* 1852.

[104] There are three examples of statue bases dedicated to Galeria Valeria: Apamea, Phrygia Pacatiana, *CIL III* 13661, *LSA* 392; Teos, Asia Minor, in R. Cagnat (ed.), *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes* (Paris, 1906), IV, 1562, *LSA* 647; Thebes, Achaea, *IG VII*, 2503, *LSA* 924. The statue base for Fausta was described in the previous footnote (*LSA* 1852).

three examples that are recorded from the eastern part of the empire come from Pamphylia, while the lone example from North Africa is from Sicca Veneria, Tunisia. The historical record from Constantinople has no bases which recorded the activities or even the name of Helena. However, this was not a trend restricted to just Helena, or imperial women generally. Although the new capital has many literary records referring to statuary, both imperial and non-imperial – nearly 160 mentions in total – extant statue bases, and their figures, are largely absent; only thirteen survive in the material record.[105] A simple comparison between the two largest cities during this period is certainly indicative of the difference in commission and survival in to the present day:[106]

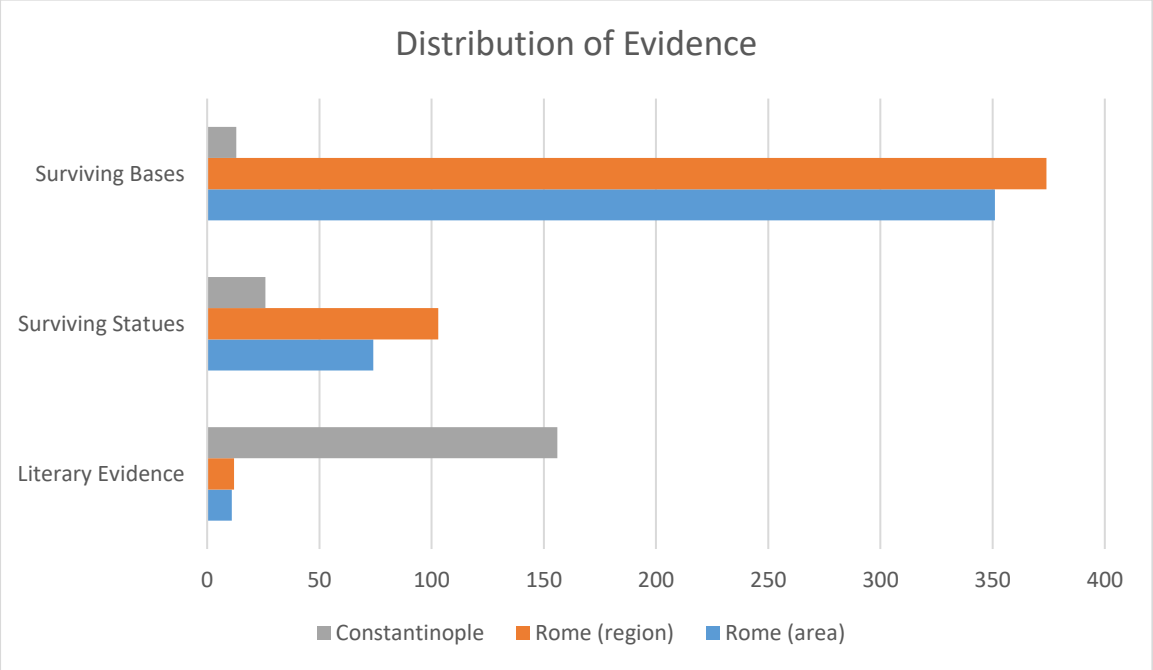


Table.3. Distribution of Evidence Focused on Statuary of the Late Antique Period.

[105] U. Gehn & B. Ward-Perkins, 'Constantinople', in R. R. R. Smith & B. Ward-Perkins (eds.), *The Last Statues of Antiquity* (Oxford, 2016), pp.136-44, p.136.
[106] Data taken from C. Machado with J. Lenaghan 'Rome', in R. R. R. Smith & B. Ward-Perkins (eds.), *The Last Statues of Antiquity* (Oxford, 2016), pp.121-35, p.122, and compared with data from Gehn & Ward-Perkins, 'Constantinople', p.136.

Evidently, Constantinople fared far worse in terms of actual material remains from the Late Antique period, and we should view the survival rates of Helena's representations within this broader framework. Just because statue bases of Helena are not found within in this area, it does not mean that they, and their complementary figural parts, did not exist there during the Late Antique period. Yet those statue bases that remain can still give us clues as to the representational values of a statue, and what messages both the literary and imagery evidence conveyed, which then in turn feed into a greater understanding of imperial female statuary in this period.

For instance, from the inscription on *LSA* 835 (fig.1.23), it can be perceived that Helena was known as *DOMINAE NOSTRAE*, 'our lady' and *PIISSIMAE AVG*, 'most pious *augusta*' by the populace, and especially within elite circles; the statue must also date after 324 due to the use of Helena's imperial title.[107] Her position within the imperial family was also noted; she is the mother of Constantine, conqueror and *augustus*, and grandmother of Constantine II and Constantius II, the most blessed and flourishing *caesars*. The location of the statue is also significant; despite Constantine's steady move towards Constantinople, elite men were still depicting the empress in the old capital city.[108] Furthermore, through the use of *IVLIVS MAXIMILIANVS V C COMES*, the donor of this statue also presents information, again idealised, of himself: Iulius Maximilianus described himself as being from the senatorial class – *V C*, *vir clarissimus*, literally 'illustrious man' – and held the principal

[107] Drijvers, 'Helena Augusta and the City of Rome', pp.148-9, collates and analyses the epigraphic evidence. *LSA* 835 holds the inscription recorded as *CIL VI* 1134.
[108] Because of the amount of inscriptions and other literary evidence, Drijvers makes the argument that Helena likely lived in Rome for most of her life after 312: Drijvers, 'Helena Augusta and the City of Rome', p.147. Harries points out that prior to the reassembling of the fragmented family in 326, much of the Constantinian family lived separate lives: Harries, 'The Empresses' Tale', pp.208-9.

position of *comes*.[109] This then indicated what type of person was both able and suitable to commission a statue of the empress: by its nature, it was an expensive task and thus excluded the less wealthy.[110] It could also suggest that it was only appropriate for those individuals of an elite background to dedicate these public-facing depictions to the empress; the proximity of their names and thus their assumed association was only suitable in this elite context. Consequently, this inscription – and statue – was significant as it suggested that not only was Helena held in this position of honour by men of a senatorial class, and therefore distinctly above them in the political hierarchy, but that it was perceived to be appropriate for the empress to be thus represented. Her political office as *augusta*, her familial relations and thus the legitimacy of said titles, her piety, and her idealised image were all narrativised together in the format of a large, public-facing depiction, open to be interpreted by a diverse audience.

The other examples of inscriptions that are still extant follow similar themes. The instance of *damnatio memoriae* present in *LSA* 1852, however, further suggested the idealisation of the public persona of the empress, indicated by the easy swap between Helena and Fausta's names and their connecting relations to Constantine. The people of Surrentum, who had initially honoured Fausta with this statue and inscription, simply changed the empress'

[109] Two of the four inscriptions in Rome come from Iulius Maximilianus (*CIL VI* 1134, *LSA* 835; *CIL VI* 36950 & p.4354, *LSA* 1540). One of the others is dedicated by a Flavius Pistius, who was a *vir perfectissimus* (*CIL VI* 1135, *LSA* 1261). Taken together, Drijvers argues that these inscriptions shows that both men were responsible for work done on Helena's estate in Rome; on the Sessorian Palace, and the *thermae Helenae* as well as the aqueduct that fed into it: Drijvers, 'Helena Augusta and the City of Rome', pp.148-9. This, however, seems to be stretching the evidence beyond its bounds.

[110] As shown in *LSA* 1852, 1751, 1875 and 1876, groups of peoples and whole towns came together to commission statues in honour of the empress.

name and swapped *UXORI*, 'wife', to *MATRI*, 'mother'.[111] Thus, in official portraiture at least, the portrayal and roles of the empress were determined by the office which they inhabited, not their personality, and belonged to a wider tradition of conventions.

From the two statue bases, *LSA* 262 and *LSA* 835, it can be evidenced by small remnants that the original image on top of it was made from bronze. This does give credence then, to some of the textual sources which describe such statues; yet none survive to this day attached to their bases. It was the case for most bronze statues that they were melted down for their valuable metals.[112] This would particularly have been true for any bronze statues in Constantinople, as it is known that the Crusaders in 1204 melted down many such statues, as well as destruction and re-use during the reigns of Byzantine emperors.[113] Thus, there is evidence for statues of Helena made from a variety of materials, as well as for a variety of purposes.

1.6 Literary Representations: Patriographical and Processional

As physical depictions of Helena complete with inscriptions have not survived, to what extent her image was disseminated throughout the imperial city of Constantinople cannot be known. However, later Byzantine sources, particularly patriographic sources, recorded what statues were set up around the city. Through these literary sources, such as the *Chronicon Paschale,*

[111] Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, p.49; *CIL X* 678.
[112] Munk Højte, *Roman Imperial Statue Bases,* p.14.
[113] The second book of Niketas Choniates is entirely devoted to the destruction of the statues of Constantinople during the looting of the city in 1204: Niketas Choniates, Ἱστορία, ed. J.-L. van Dieten, CFHB 11 (Berlin, 1975), trans. H. J. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates,* Byzantine Texts in Translation (Detroit, MI, 1984): Choniates, II.

Chronographia, the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* and the *Patria,*[114] the number of statues later identified as Helena in Constantinople can be established, and we can sometimes locate them within the urban topography. According to the *Chronicon Paschale*, a chronicle listing events from the time of Adam until 627, Constantine set up great columns and statues outside a basilica that he had built. This became the Senate, which Constantine named the 'Augustaeum because he had also set up opposite his own monument of his mother, Lady Helena Augusta, on a porphyry column'.[115] A similar story is related in John Malalas' work, further corroborating the existence and location of this particular statue and Constantine's role in its placement.[116] Thus, not only was there a statue of Helena in an area of political significance, one which was associated with those traditional patrician families and the continuation of Roman senatorial traditions – irrespective of whether there was any real power there – but the area itself was named after her and the office which she occupied. It might also be argued that any subsequent empress who used this title and thereby inhabited that office was also associated with that public, political space, and also the figure of Helena.

---

[114] *Chronicon Paschale,* ed. L. Dindorf, CSHB 9 (Bonn, 1832), trans. M. Whitby & M. Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale, 284-628 AD,* TTH 7 (Liverpool, 1989): *Chron. Pasc.;* Theophanes the Confessor, Χρονογραφία, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1883; repr. Hildesheim/New York, NY, 1980), trans. C. Mango & R. Scott, with G. Greatrex (eds.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813* (Oxford, 1997): Theophanes*;* Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, ed. T. Preger, *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1902), trans. A. Berger (ed.), *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The Patria*, DOML 24 (Cambridge, MA 2013): *Patria*.

[115] *Chron. Pasch.,* 528-9.

[116] The *Chronographia* of John Malalas relates that Constantine '… set up a statue of his mother Helena as Augusta, on a low porphyry column. This place he called the Augusteion': John Malalas, Χρονογραφία ed. L. Dindorf, CSHB 32 (Bonn, 1831), trans. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys, & R. Scott (eds.), *Chronographia,* BA 4 (Melbourne, 1986): Malalas, 13.8. It is likely that the *Chronicon Paschale* used John Malalas as the source of information for this segment, if not independently seen.

There were several other statues of Helena recorded around the city, although in such representations she was usually coupled with Constantine and holding a cross: a symbol of her quasi-legendary status as the one who found the relics of the True Cross.[117] The *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* has been referred to as 'a kind of tourist's guidebook to the curiosities of Constantinople'[118] and its worth has been questioned as it is 'both incomplete and repetitive'.[119] It is true that the authors of this text expended more effort on pseudo-historical anecdotes and rumours associated with the statuary described, than in delving into the appearance, location, and identity of the various pieces.[120] Nevertheless, it is a patriographic text, and related what some eighth-century Constantinopolitans thought of the statues that apparently still decorated the city; those figures of the past who still occupied a place in the collective memory of the city and also how they were remembered, through their images and through the stories that had been passed down about them. There are six chapters where statues were mentioned in connection with Helena; one chapter, concerning the building of Hagia Sophia, claims that Justinian I removed a large, mostly pagan, collection of statuary from the building that had existed there before.[121] This included three statues of Helena, 'one of porphyry and other marbles, another with silver inlay on a bronze column and the other of ivory…' which were then distributed around the city where, the author adds,

[117] Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena', p.59.
[118] C. Mango, 'Ancient Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder', *DOP* 17 (1963), pp.53-75, p.60.
[119] Cameron & Herrin, *Parastaseis*, p.1.
[120] Cameron & Herrin, *Parastaseis*, pp.1-3, for commentary on this.
[121] *Parastaseis,* ch. 71-2.

they can still be found around two centuries later, if one knows where to look.[122]

In a section dedicated to the mythical battles of Constantine, Helena is mentioned several times; in the Forum Bovis, after a battle with Byzas, a 'silver gilt cross was set up and likenesses of Constantine and Helena' on either side of it, with both being described as 'the slaves of God' holding up the cross.[123] A later chapter in this section has Constantine setting up enthroned statues of himself, Helena and his sons beside a porphyry column with a gilded cross atop, on the gate of the Philadelphion. This, the author tells us, was where Constantine had a dream featuring the sign of the cross and so erected the column and statues to honour the site.[124] There are then a few instances of statues of Helena in the Forum, though it is not clear to which of the fora the authors were referring; presumably, they were referring to the Forum of Constantine, one of the key areas of the city. One chapter recorded a fire in the 'Senate of the Forum', from which Theodosios II orders the rescue of a statue of Helena, among others, which was 'of porphyry all over'.[125]

When examining the *Parastaseis*, it should be compared to another patriographical work written at least two centuries later.[126] The *Patria* was a compilation of four books, the contents of which range from descriptions of the foundation of Constantinople, to historical anecdotes and the topographical

---

[122] *Parastaseis,* ch. 72-3. This is not helpful in terms of locating Helena's statues, but does indicate that others were thought to be scattered around the city. The sense of being "in the know" comes across quite strongly in this particular chapter. For further discussion on this theme of 'hidden knowledge', see B. Anderson, 'Classified Knowledge: The Epistemology of Statuary in the Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai', *BMGS* 35.1 (2011), pp.1-19.
[123] *Parastaseis,* ch.52.
[124] *Parastaseis,* ch.58. This is another example of a mistake in the text: it is usually held that Constantine had this vision the night prior to the Battle of Milvian Bridge and thus would have taken place near Rome.
[125] *Parastaseis,* ch.43.
[126] Berger, *Patria,* xvii.

layout of the city, to descriptions of the statues therein. It was compiled in the tenth century but incorporated large amounts of older materials, dating from the sixth century onwards.[127] The first two books are of the most relevance to this study, as the first discussed at length the reign and activities of Constantine the Great, and the second discussed the statuary of Constantinople. The first book incorporated fragments, written by Hesychios of Miletos of a no longer extant, sixth-century work, with some parts greatly expanded by the author of the *Patria.*[128] The second book of the *Patria* contains a great deal from the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*; more than half of the entries come directly from a version very close to the original and an intermediary source, whilst close to a third of the book was written by the author of the *Patria* or came from other sources written after the *Parastaseis*.[129] The text has many of the problems associated with the *Parastaseis*, due to its choice in source material, and is both repetitive and rife with historical inaccuracies and elaboration.[130] Yet, this text was widespread and clearly popular in Byzantium, with over sixty versions surviving, in varying states, and allows scholars in-depth insight into the beliefs of and the reception of the statuary of Constantinople by its inhabitants.[131]

Helena is mentioned several times in conjunction with statuary in the *Patria*. One such example is a chapter in Book Two, the contents of which are echoed earlier in a smaller chapter in Book One.[132] This simply states that Constantine had a statue of Helena set up on a column in a place which he

[127] Berger, *Patria*, xii-ix.
[128] Berger, *Patria*, viii, xii-xiii.
[129] Berger, *Patria*, xiii-xiv.
[130] Berger, *Patria,* xiv.
[131] Berger, *Patria*, xvii-xviii.
[132] *Patria,* 1.44, 2.15.

called the Augustion. This seems similar to the mention of a statue of Helena in the *Chronicon Paschale*, and by John Malalas in his *Chronographia.*[133] In the longer chapter, it is thought that Constantine set up a statue of his mother in the 'Augoustion', Αύγουστιωνος, the food market in which 'the regionarchs used to dance… in honour of the emperor of that time'.[134] There is some confusion with this passage, and Berger argues that the public square described was confused with the courtyard in front of the Great Palace. Nevertheless, the author of the *Patria* believed that this was the case and that a statue of Helena did stand in a position where those actively involved in the public life of the city honoured the current imperial household, an area of significant political importance. Thus, it would seem that the image believed to be Helena was still a salient part of the imperial ideal, at least for an inhabitant of Constantinople.

There are several chapters which are essentially the same in these two texts, though this is unsurprising considering how much content from the *Parastaseis* the *Patria* absorbed in Book Two. For example, both texts describe 'Kontaria', as it has been called, where it was believed that Constantine pulled down a pagan temple after a war of two years, and built a church to the Theotokos, where he was portrayed with Helena, Christ and the Virgin Mary.[135] The precise location of 'Kontaria' is unknown but it has been suggested that it was a section of Constantinople which overlooked the Harbour of Sophia, also known as the Harbour of Julian, or the *kontoskalion.*[136] There are other problems with this chapter, which is mainly that it would have been out of character for Constantine to convert a pagan temple to a Christian church,

[133] *Patria,* 1.44; *Chron. Pasch.,* 528-9; Malalas, 13.8.
[134] *Patria,* 2.15.
[135] *Parastaseis,* ch.53; *Patria,* 2.66.
[136] Cameron & Herrin, *Parastaseis*, p.240.

since such conversions did not normally occur until the sixth century.[137] This could therefore be an imposition of eighth- and then tenth-century ideals into the text about Constantine and Helena, their idealised actions, and also the 'dedication of Constantinople to the Virgin Mary'.[138] But, whatever the case, it is clear that the mid-Byzantine authors found the True Cross and the Virgin Mary suitable counterparts to Constantine and Helena.

Constantine, 'the patron of the Forum', was recorded as having set up in the Forum a cross thrice inscribed with the phrase 'Hagios', in between statues of himself and Helena, accompanied by angels. There was also, according to the *Parastaseis*, another statue group of Constantine and his sons close by.[139] The same account is given twice in the *Patria*, with one 'doublet' chapter bearing a close similarity to the *Parastaseis* and the other, earlier chapter being slightly different.[140] The extra figures in the earlier chapter are described as 'winged messengers' and the cross between the two imperial figures bears a different inscription: 'one holy, one lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father, Amen'.[141] This again indicates the perception of Helena held by those in the Middle Byzantine period, and where it was appropriate that she be displayed and in the company of whom.

On top of the Milion, there was also a statue of Constantine and Helena, with a cross and the Tyche of the city 'in the middle of the cross'.[142] The *Patria* repeats much the same account but gives much more information when

---

[137] Cameron & Herrin, *Parastaseis*, p.240.
[138] Cameron & Herrin, *Parastaseis*, p.240. Furthermore, paganism was not actively discouraged by the state until after the Edict of Thessaloniki in 380, which made Nikaean Christianity the state religion.
[139] *Parastaseis,* ch.16.
[140] *Patria,* 2.16; 2.102.
[141] *Patria,* 2.16.
[142] *Parastaseis,* ch.34.

describing the Tyche in the centre of the cross, as a 'small chain which is locked and enchanted'.[143] This enchantment 'ensures that no commodity of any kind is lacking' for Constantinople but also 'brings victory over all pagans'.[144] The Tyche is particularly unusual in this context; though a semi-pagan figure, the personification is associated, and almost combined, with an imperial model of piety. As such, it could be argued that this statue group is given the apotropaic ability to repel negative influences, perhaps pagans given the context and hence safeguard the city from their ill intentions; in this instance, the Tyche might not just personify the good fortune of a city.

It is quite unlikely that any statue groups of Helena and Constantine with the True Cross were commissioned by Constantine and thus from the early fourth century, as the *Parastaseis* states. As mentioned, the legend of Helena and the True Cross did not become popularised until around seventy years after Helena's journey to the eastern provinces, as seen in Ambrose's funeral oration.[145] If, indeed, these statue groups did exist and were meant to represent Helena, then it would be much more likely that they were a fifth-century commission. Regardless, the locations in which these 'Helena' statues could have been housed are conspicuous and important public monuments or places where many would gather, such as the fora and the Milion. They were areas where imperial imagery was usually displayed, and thus show that Helena's image was still used, and associated with the acknowledged foundation of

[143] *Patria,* 2.29.
[144] *Patria*, 2.29.
[145] Ambrose, 41-51. See B. Baert, trans. L. Preedy, *A Heritage of Holy Wood: The Legend of the True Cross in Text and Image* (Leiden & Boston, MA, 2004), for discussion on the uses and impact of the True Cross after the establishment of the legend, throughout the medieval period. Drijvers discusses the reception and spread of the Helena and True Cross myths: see Drijvers, 'Helena Augusta, the Cross', pp.151-74.

power for hundreds of years. These were the appropriate stages for Helena's images to be portrayed upon.

1.6.1 Processions

Significantly, the locations that were thought to have statues of Helena in them coincided with some of the 'key nodal points'[146] of the regular feast day processions that took place in the city. One of the main sources for processional activities in Constantinople is the *Book of Ceremonies*, a collection of ceremonial protocols which was compiled by, or on behalf of, Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos in the tenth century.[147] Further information for major and minor religious processions – both fixed and moveable cycles of festivals – can be taken from the *typikon* of the Hagia Sophia, also compiled in the tenth century, though somewhat earlier than the *Book of Ceremonies*.[148] Despite the two texts being created so close in date, surprisingly there was some disparity between the ceremonial procedures proscribed for identical feast days, such as how often and in which processions the emperor was supposed to participate in. It has been suggested that the *Book of Ceremonies* only partly reflected the reality of imperial involvement, with the text being in some ways aspirational, suggesting what actions should be undertaken for imperial rule 'to acquire

[146] L. Brubaker, 'Topography and the Creation of Public Space in Early Medieval Constantinople', in M. de Jong, C. van Rhijn, & F. Theuws (eds.), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2001), pp.31-44, p.39.
[147] Moffatt & Tall, *BOC I,* xxiii.
[148] J. Mateos (ed. & trans.), *Le typicon de la Grande Église, MS. Sainte-Croix no.40, Xe siècle, I: Le Cycle des Douze Mois*, Orientalia christiana analecta 165-6 (Rome, 1962): *Grande Église,* p.2. Dating is discussed in A. Berger, 'Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions in Constantinople', in N. Necipoğlu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life* (Leiden, 2001), pp.73-87, pp.74-5.

more nobility'.[149] In spite of this, from these texts it can be understood that the main processional routes usually followed part of the Mese, the main thoroughfare of the city, and stopped at other focal points, particularly the Forum of Constantine, with the *typikon* of the Hagia Sophia having processions stop there almost exclusively, before reaching their end goal – normally a church – and then often returning to where the procession had begun.[150] Imperial processions also had their place in the city, though since the capital was moved to Constantinople, they had taken on an increasingly more religious facet, rather than simply continuing the tradition of triumphs of earlier imperial Rome.[151]

The *typikon* of the Hagia Sophia was a liturgical calendar, which went into detail on the feasts that took place throughout the year; from the actual locations the procession walked through, to specifically focusing on which prayers and readings should be undertaken. Regardless, the *typikon* is still useful for this case study. Most entries start with an almost formulaic section, giving the date for their festival and introducing the saint: 'On the 21 May, reverence takes place in memory of the first emperors Constantine and Helena…'.[152] As described here, the festival of Constantine and Helena was celebrated on 21 May; the procession started with prayers at the Hagia Sophia, travelling to the Church of the Holy Apostles, where the procession ended with

---

[149] *BOC I,* R3. The preface of the text itself admits that the main impetus behind implementing these protocols was to bolster the image of imperial rule and to be 'a cause of wonder' to both the people and to foreigners, causing some doubts as to whether these instructions were actually carried out to the letter or on a regular basis. This is also discussed in Berger, 'Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions', p.75.
[150] Berger, 'Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions', pp.73-7.
[151] McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, pp.35, 63. The significance of imperial victories decreased slowly after the move to Constantinople, with circus celebrations increasing in number and liturgical processions becoming more popular from the sixth century.
[152] *Grande Église,* p.296. 136v, 153r.

prayers; the Cistern of Bonus is also mentioned, possibly in relation to the direction from which the emperor would come, which was only a short distance from the church.[153] Doubtless, the procession would have encountered several of Helena's images on their route, such as the statue groups at the Milion, in the Forum of Constantine and also at the Gate of the Philadelphion.

The procession for the feast day of St Thekla, commemorating 'the trial of the holy martyr and apostle'[154] is another example of a festival which may have intersected areas which housed Helena's statues. The *typikon* lays out the procedure for this festival in much the same way as Constantine and Helena's festival, with some difference in the amount of information given. Presuming a start at the Hagia Sophia, the procession would then proceed down from the Forum – we can assume the Forum of Constantine, given the prevalence of the Forum in these public matters, it is the most direct route, and a popular nexus for processions – to the Κριθοπωλείοις, the barley-market, where the church of St Thekla was located.[155] This barley-market was probably located next to the Harbour of Sophia which, as discussed previously, was likely overlooked by Kontaria.[156] If this is the case, the festival of St Thekla could have intersected with the statue groups at the Milion, the Forum of Constantine and possibly at Kontaria.

There were several processions which would only go between the Hagia Sophia and the Great Palace, and were usually the major ones led by the

[153] *Grande Église,* p.296. 153r-153v. For suggestions about the location of the Cistern of Bonus, which may also have been a palace: A. Van Milligen, *Byzantine Constantinople: The Walls of the City and Adjoining Historical Sites* (Cambridge, 1899, repr. 2010), p.24.
[154] *Grande Église*, p.42. 14v-15r.
[155] *Grande Église*, p.42. 14v-15r.
[156] See R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et répertoire topographique* (Paris, 1964), pp.98, 374, for further discussion on this area.

emperor, such as on Christmas Day.[157] Though these were short processions, the route was also quite common. It was such a well-trodden route that the *Book of Ceremonies* begins with a thirty-five page description on how it should be completed accurately, with some amendments towards the end of the chapter for special occasions, such as the Annunciation and Easter Saturday.[158] Invariably the procession would start at the Golden Hall before travelling through the various sections of the Palace.[159] It would then go out of the Chalke Gate, into the Augoustaion, where the participants would undoubtedly see the statue of Helena, and possibly the one atop the Milion depending on their route.[160] The route then led into the Hagia Sophia, specifically through the Beautiful Door, where a service would take place.[161] Thus, many of the most important services of the year, led by the emperor, and attended by the Patriarch, would have enabled the participants to view representations of Helena.

A particularly long procession was that of the feast day of St Mokios, which often coincided with the fortieth day of Pentecost.[162] This route would take the procession from the Great Palace, past the Chalke Gate – and therefore, the Milion – into the Forum of Constantine, through the Philadelphion, the Forum of the Bull and, after several receptions at other areas, the processors would arrive at the Church of St Mokios.[163] Through the

---

[157] *BOC I,* R3.
[158] *BOC I,* R3-R35.
[159] *BOC I,* R3-R13.
[160] *BOC I,* R11-R14.
[161] *BOC I,* R14.
[162] *BOC I,* R98. This procession does not seem to have been carried out after the attempted assassination of Leo VI in 903 at the Church of St Mokios during this feast day. For further discussion on the attempt on Leo's life, see S. Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912): Politics and People* (Leiden, 1997), pp.225-7.
[163] *BOC I,* R98-R101.

description of this procession, it can be estimated that those involved may have seen at least four statues of Helena.

Therefore, even if incorrectly labelled as her or located in the wrong place, the *Parastaseis* – and later the *Patria* – still suggests that Helena's image was vivid in the memory of citizens in the eighth century and onwards. When used in conjunction with sources on processions in Constantinople, it can be seen that Helena's image was thought to be in locations which were used very regularly by events which were integral to public life. Her image became part of the landscape of the city; it was considered appropriate to be placed in locations of such importance, and this was certainly during both the time of her son's reign and after the end of the fourth century. Her association with her son, the True Cross, and her reputation for piety can all be seen in these texts, of which the *Parastaseis* was an 'early witness to the growing cult' of Constantine and Helena.[164]

This growth of the cult of Helena and Constantine in the ninth century onwards, resulted in the pair being documented together in a variety of media – icons, frescoes, ivories, text, and coins – and in areas in the Greek Orthodox world and the peripheries of Byzantium.[165] Their later *vita* – likely written in the eighth to tenth centuries – is unlikely to have much in the way of dealing with historical truth, but it does underline the significance of Helena – and Constantine – to its contemporary audience, and also suggests how they were remembered and commemorated. That they were usually portrayed as a pair in the Eastern Roman Empire, has recently been commented upon. Georgiou

[164] Cameron & Herrin, *Parastaseis*, p.265.
[165] See A. Kazhdan, "Constantin imaginaire': Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great', *Byz* 57 (1987), pp.196-250, for further discussion.

argued that within the manufactured narrative – both visual and textual – built up around Helena, the extent of her role was almost exclusively dependent on Constantine; it was he who was the 'major figure behind all Christian activities'.[166] Yet, it has also been argued by Holum that the journey undertaken by Helena was to bolster the reputation of the imperial family after it was blighted by intrigue and execution after 326; Helena's journey to Jerusalem and the surrounding areas became the antecedent for Christian pilgrimage – though it could be argued that the texts portray this as being done either by Constantine's design or at least with his encouragement.[167] This idealised image of Helena, and therefore the office of the empress, carried on in into later centuries, particularly in the fifth century. Harries argues that when Constantine reassembled his family after the bloodshed of 326, they were redrawn as united and actively pious – particularly evidenced by the activities of Helena, but also Eutropia, and Constantia in Rome – and as a result the imperial women, intentionally or not, reshaped the role of the Christian empress with their innovative patronage and pious actions.[168]

As mentioned earlier in this case study, contemporary writers in Helena's lifetime, largely Eusebius of Caesarea, set her pious reputation in motion, leading to the works of Ambrose, and to the comparison in saints' vitae as far

---

[166] Georgiou, 'Helena', pp.623-4. Georgiou also convincingly argues that the treatment of Helena within texts was directly related to the attitude of the author towards the current empress: Georgiou, 'Helena', pp.615-23.
[167] Holum, 'Hadrian and St Helena', pp.66-81. For other historians who consider the events of 326 to be the main impetus, see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp.220-1. See also E. D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire, AD 312-460* (Oxford, 1982), pp.32-5, who further argues that Eusebius alluded to this in his biography of Constantine.
[168] Harries, 'The Empresses' Tale', p.212, and particularly pp.209-11, for Constantia as a patron of St Agnes and basilica dedicated to her in Rome, using the language of military triumph to highlight Agnes as the martyred virgin. Constantia also 'confidently addresses' God directly in this inscription ('Constantina Deo') as the pious sole patron. This Constantia was the daughter of Fausta and Constantine, rather than the half-sister who returned to the imperial court after the execution of her husband and son by Constantine (see Appendix 1.1). Here Harries gives them an active role in the change of the office of the *augusta*.

away as the Medieval West.[169] The cultural memory of Helena as the philanthropic, pious *augusta*, and both the ideal mother and empress was clearly a profound one; stretching from Constantinople, to Rome and Trier – seen in the medieval tradition of her patronage there – but then even further afield, gaining traction through the many centuries of Byzantine rule.

Conclusion

Helena's appearance on many coins of differing values, in epigraphical records, and in several texts, alongside her enduring reputation make her an ideal candidate for this study. Though no statuary survives that could be specifically identified as her, her appearance in later patriographic sources gives present-day viewers the opportunity to appreciate how widespread her image may have been, in a variety of media, which would have reached all levels of society. Her image was depicted on base metal *folles*, used in daily transactions, and gold *solidi*, used mainly by the wealthy and elite, to display messages about the security of the empire. It also served to bolster the reputation of the imperial family, especially after the deaths of Crispus and Fausta, and then posthumously to compete in the high stakes of the political game that developed after the death of Constantine. That statues of Helena existed can certainly be seen from the remnants of the statue bases found throughout the empire, which further underlined her status and how her image

[169] The sixth-century saint, Radegund, a princess of the Thuringian imperial family, turned nun, was associated with and compared to Helena in her *vita*: Venantius Fortunatus, *The Life of the Holy Radegund,* ed. B. Krusch, *Presbyteri Italici, Opera Pedestria,* MGH SRM 2:358-405 (Berlin, 1885), trans. J. E. Halborg, J. A. McNamara, & E. Gordon Whatley (eds.), *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (London & Durham, NC, 1992), pp.70-105: *Radegund,* II.16. She was also sent a relic of the True Cross by Justin II, thus providing the name for her convent, the Abbey of the Holy Cross, at Poitiers: *Radegund,* II.16-17.

was being used. Through texts, we learn that she was likely to have had statuary that could be seen in public arenas all over the capital city, and in areas that also had numerous public processions intersecting them, led by both the patriarch and the emperor. Even if this was not the case, that writers in the eighth to the tenth century thought it was suitable that her name was associated with these areas, therefore allowing us to reflect on how important she became, alongside her son, in the cultural memory of the city, and also the longevity of her pious and matriarchal reputation. Within the context of this thesis, the study of Helena's representations has proven to be an important one as the idealised portrayal of Helena, especially within her role as a pious empress, becomes a paragon for later empresses, and sets the tone for subsequent female rule in a direct line until the end of the Byzantine Empire.

Chapter Two: Aelia Ariadne

Aelia Ariadne was the first of two daughters of Verina and Leo I (457-474). Leo had no sons who survived him, leaving Ariadne as the heir to imperial power in the eastern empire. She married the Isaurian general, Zeno, and several years later in 474, on the death of her father, their son Leo became sole emperor.[1] As he was still an infant, Leo II elevated his father, Zeno, to co-emperor – the sources vary on who was responsible for encouraging this – but the infant Leo died some months afterwards, leaving Zeno as the sole ruler.[2] Ariadne and Zeno did not reign peacefully for long: several members of the imperial family revolted against them, causing the couple to flee the capital.[3] There are some contrasting details in the sources which discuss this rebellion; these mostly concern how involved Verina, Ariadne's mother, was, and what the underlying causes were. The end result was that Basiliskos – Verina's brother – was in power for at least a year, but that Zeno and Ariadne were able to overthrow him and return to Constantinople.[4] Zeno died in 491 and Ariadne quickly remarried: her second husband was Anastasios, who 'belonged to the corps of the Silentiaries'.[5] They ruled together until Ariadne's death in 515, with Anastasios outliving her and ruling by himself for a further three years. Neither

[1] Evagrios, II.XV, XVII. Zeno was selected by Ariadne's father to ameliorate the growing tension and rival power of Aspar; Croke explores the dynamics between the major power players of the period, and Leo's backing of Zeno to promote their own dynastic succession: B. Croke, "Dynasty and Ethnicity: Emperor Leo I and the Eclipse of Aspar', *Chiron* 35 (2005), pp.147-203.
[2] Evagrios, II.XVII. Child-emperors (and consuls) were not uncommon in Late Antiquity, and Leo's elevation at such a young age was increasingly normal: the son of Valentinian I (364-75), Valentinian II (375-92), was acclaimed emperor by a political faction when he was just four, rivalling the claims of his older brother, Gratian. The concept had been 'institutionalised' over the past century, particularly in the West: see M. A. McEvoy, *Child Emperor Rule in the Late Roman West* (Oxford, 2013), and for Leo II, see pp.326-7.
[3] Evagrios, II.XVII. See Appendix 1.2 for an overview.
[4] Evagrios, III.III.
[5] Evagrios, III.XXIX.

of Ariadne's marriages provided heirs who outlived their parents, resulting in a commander of the 'imperial body-guards', Justin I, being proclaimed emperor in 518, with his wife Lupicina-Euphemia.[6]

Ariadne was chosen for this series of case studies as she was one of only a few females in the Byzantine imperial line where power was passed directly to her from her father, because of a lack of immediate male heirs; an eleventh-century example of this is Constantine VIII (1025-8) and his two daughters Zoe and Theodora.[7] Due to her positioning within the imperial family, Ariadne became a figure of legitimisation for the reigns of both Zeno and Anastasios, to both of whom she was married, thereby declaring them both emperors. Ariadne's position in the early Byzantine period is of interest to this thesis; how she was portrayed in both physical images and in the literary sources will be explored, and whether or not her privileged status was reflected in the imagery, either physical or literary, will be examined. Thus, the themes of portraiture – both identified and potential – and positioning will be closely linked in this chapter. This is particularly the case for the consular diptychs and ivory plaques; the steel-yard weights, on the other hand, will be examined in terms of what they might tell us about the representation of the office of the empress, rather than anything specific about Ariadne. Although there is not much in the way of evidence of patronage for Ariadne specifically, her displayed piety and the patronage activities of her family will also be looked at in this chapter. The

[6] Evagrios IV.I.

[7] Constantine VIII did have another daughter, Eudokia, but she was struck by an illness in childhood which disfigured her and she spent the rest of her life in a convent; Michael Psellos, Χρονογραφία, ed. E. Renaud, 2 vols (Paris, 1926-8), trans. E. R. A. Sewter, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: The* Chronographia *of Michael Psellus* (London, 1966): Psellos, II.6, p.56. As pointed out by Shaun Tougher in a recent seminar (Birmingham, 2020), this has been diagnosed as being smallpox: J. Lascaratos & C. Tsiamis, 'Two Cases of Smallpox in Byzantium', *International Journal of Dermatology* 41.11 (2002), pp.792-5, p.793.

number of extant images which could arguably depict her also makes Ariadne a clear choice for the case study of an empress in this century.

Pulcheria or Eudoxia, respectively the sister and wife of Theodosios II (408-450) and both *augustae* in their own right, would also have made good case studies for this period. However, after the seminal work by Holum on Theodosian empresses, which placed Pulcheria and Eudokia at the political centre, it has recently been noted that too much may have been placed at their door, though this does not mean that they were not influential during this period.[8] In terms of imagery, although the two empresses were placed on coins, overall, there is not much more extant that can positively be identified as them specifically.[9] For Ariadne, on the other hand, there is a considerable amount of material to consider.

---

[8]See Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, pp.79-111. For examples on the overemphasis of Pulcheria's role, see C. Mango, 'Constantinople as Theotokoupolis', p.17, for his argument that several of the buildings that Pulcheria was thought to have patronised were actually built later, and hence suggests successive empresses, such as Verina or Ariadne, as the patrons. For a more measured approach to the power of Pulcheria – and to some extent Aelia Eudokia – see J. Harries, 'Men without Women: Theodosius' Consistory and the Business of Government', in C. Kelly (ed.), *Theodosius II: Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2013), pp.67-89. Harries pinpoints a change in emphasis from military exploits to an 'ostentatiously pious ethos and image' within the Theodosian dynasty, which benefited the imperial women of the family and in fact made their positions essential though, as she shows, this did not give them a great deal of sway with the law-making body of the time: Harries, 'Men without Women', pp.70, 88.

[9] Even the empress in the Trier Ivory, which has largely been regarded as a representation of Pulcheria (see K. G. Holum & G. Vikan, 'The Trier Ivory, Adventus Ceremonial and the Relics of St. Stephen', *DOP* 33 (1979), pp.113-33), is now thought to be a much later representation, possibly as late as the ninth century: J. Wortley, 'The Trier Ivory Reconsidered', *GRBS* 21.4 (1980), pp.381-94. See also L. Brubaker, 'The Chalke Gate, the Construction of the Past, and the Trier Ivory', *BMGS* 23 (1999), pp.258-85, specifically placing the ivory in the ninth century; additionally, re-identified as Eirene (797-802): see P. Niewöhner, 'Historisch-topographische Überlegungen zum Trierer Prozessionselfenbein, dem Christusbild an der Chalke, Kaiserin Irenes Triumph im Bilderstreit und der Euphemiakirche am Hippodrom', *Millennium: Yearbook on the Culture and History of the First Millennium C.E.* 11 (2014), pp.261-88. For further discussion, see Chapter 5: Eirene of Athens.
In Byzantine texts, there is evidence that images of Pulcheria did exist. In 1203, Mesarites wrote that he could see that she had the 'likeness of the all-holy virgin' at her tomb in the Holy Apostles, presumably indicating that an image of Pulcheria existed there: Nikolaos Mesarites, *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles, Constantinople*, ed. A. Heisenberg, *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche Zwei Basiliken Konstantins: Untersuchungen zue Kunst und*

2.1 Numismatic Evidence

While fifth-century empresses were common on coinage, there are fewer examples of coins extant which were minted in the name of Ariadne. They are certainly fewer in number than previous empresses, such as Helena and Fausta, discussed in the previous chapter, and her more recent predecessors, Pulcheria and Verina.[10] The coins appear to have been issued from the mint of Constantinople, and were of two denominations, *tremissis* and *solidi*.[11] The surviving coins were probably minted towards the end of Zeno's reign, or perhaps the beginning of Anastasios': they consist of an image of Ariadne on the obverse – a profile bust with a pearl diadem – encircled by the inscription 'AEL(IA) ARIADNE AVG(USTA)', 'Aelia Ariadne, *augusta*' with minor variations to the title.[12] On the reverse, one coin type depicted a Victory holding a wreath and *globus cruciger* (fig.1.25), whilst the other type bears a cross surrounded by a wreath (fig.1.26).[13] On the reverse of the former type, the legend around the Victory reads 'VICTORIA AVGGG'.[14] Angelova has made the argument that the number of G's was indicative of the number of *augusti* recognised by the eastern court, which must mean that the *augustae* were included; this, she

---

Literatur des ausgehenden Altertums II (Leipzig, 1908), pp.10-96, trans. M. Angold, *Nicholas Mesarites: His Life and Works (in Translation)* TTB 4 (Liverpool, 2017), pp.75-133: Mesarites, III.XXXIX, p.125.

There are also a series of mosaics depicting members of the imperial family (both the eastern and western families) in St John the Evangelist, Ravenna, set up by Galla Placidia and including images of Eudokia, who was married to her nephew, Theodosios II, and Eudoxia, their child who later married Valentinian III (425-55): *Rossi*, 85-6, p.16.

[10] For the coins of Pulcheria, see J. P. C. Kent, *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol X: The Divided Empire and the Fall of the Western Parts, AD 395-491* (London, 1994): *RIC X*, pp.254-73, cat.205-6, 211, 214, 220, 224, 226-7, 252, 255, 261, 280, 288, 295, 303, 316, 322a, 326-7, 334, 340, 345, 375, 383, 387, 420, 425-7. For coins of Verina: *RIC X*, pp.285-8, cat. 606-7, 614-5, 631-3.

[11] *RIC X*, pp.309-10, cat.933, 933a, 934-5, 936-8.

[12] *RIC X*, pp.309-10, cat.933, 933a, 934-5, 936-8.

[13] *RIC X*, p.118. For cross within wreath type: *RIX X*, cat.933a, 934-5, 938. For the Victory and cross type: *RIC X*, cat.933, 936-7.

[14] *RIC X,* cat.936 (Zeno, East).

argues, indicated that the empress was being showcased as an 'imperial colleague in victory'.[15] This ties in with earlier discussions on the development of representations of Helena, Galeria Valeria, and Constantia,[16] that the representation of the *augusta* was being co-opted into displaying images of, and using, imperial victory. The latter of the Ariadne coins was a standard type carried on from the Theodosian empresses, thereby linking each empress in a long line with the burgeoning legend of the True Cross and Helena, and her pious reputation.[17]

What is surprising in this period is that the coins of Ariadne did not depict her image as being crowned by the hand of God, as many of her predecessors had been, including the relatively immediate example of her mother, Verina (fig.1).[18] This particular coin type suggested that the empress depicted on the coin had been crowned through the will of God, and thus had divine approval. It is curious therefore that Ariadne's coins did not employ the same method. The *manus dei* slowly fell out of favour – it was not associated with depictions of women after Verina until the thirteenth century –[19] and perhaps she did not need more obvious signals of divine approval, as her legitimacy was not in doubt since she belonged directly to the bloodline of two

---

[15] Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, p.199. The dating of this coin type by *RIC* is 476-491: rule in the Western Roman Empire was unstable during this period, and could refer to Julius Nepos (474-480) or Romulus Augustulus (475-476) – though the latter is unlikely. Angelova does not go into detail about who the other recognised *augusti* might be for the Ariadne coins – her example of 'AVGGG' Pulcheria coins is Pulcheria, Marcian and Western Roman Emperor Valentinian III (425-55). She does note that, even if her G theory is inaccurate and the G was no longer significant to their audience, the plurality and placement still associated the empress with imperial victory.

[16] See 1.1: Numsimatic Evidence, for discussion on Constantia, Fausta and Constantine's daughter, and her co-opting of imperial victory.

[17] Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', p.580.

[18] *RIC X*, p.52. For Verina's coins with the hand of God surmounting her bust, see cat.606-7, 631-33. This iconography had been employed since the coins of Aelia Eudoxia: *RIC X,* cat.10-15 (Arkadios) for this iconography on her *solidi*.

[19] See Chapter Ten and Chapter Eleven for later iterations of the *manus dei*.

previous emperors, as both daughter and mother. Additionally, Ariadne is the last empress to follow the traditional image found on the obverse of imperial female coins; after her tenure, the profile bust of the empress in court dress, with a diadem and other jewellery cease to be used. She was also the last empress to appear on *solidi* as the sole female figure until Eirene of Athens, where she was represented as both regent and then sole empress, in the eighth century. In the years that followed Ariadne's reign, in the sixth century, no empress was shown on a coin until Sophia, *augusta* and wife of Justin II, who was depicted enthroned with her husband from 565.

2.1.1 Commemorative Issues

There is one *solidus* which is of a different type and comes from the first year of the reign of Ariadne and Anastasios in 491 (fig.1.26). On the obverse, a three-quarter bust of Anastasios is depicted wearing a plumed helmet, trefoil ornament and diadem upon his head, a tunic and cuirass, and holding a spear behind his head – a traditional image of an emperor in military garb, continuing from the reign of Constantius II – and is encircled with the words D(OMINUS) N(OSTRA) ANASTAS-IVS PERP(ETUITAS) AVG(USTUS), 'our lord, Anastasios, *augustus* in perpetuity'.[20] On the reverse Anastasios was depicted on the left, with the trefoil ornament, and Ariadne on the right, wearing a three-pointed crown, with Christ between them, overseeing the couple who are holding hands;

[20] A. R. Bellinger, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol I: Anastasius I to Maurice (491-602)* (Washington D.C., 1966): *DOC I*, pp.4-5, cat.2; F. W. Madden, C. Roach Smith, & S. W. Stevenson, *A Dictionary of Roman Coins: Republican and Imperial* (London, 1889), p.619.

the reverse also bears the inscription 'FELICITER NVBTIIS', an acclamation at joyful occasions, particularly weddings.[21]

This coin undoubtedly celebrated the occasion of their marriage, and showed it as divinely blessed and approved. It may also have been an attempt to establish the official legitimacy of Anastasios' accession to the imperial power, as he gained his position as emperor through his union with Ariadne, and to indicate that this accession was also divinely sanctioned. However, this group image is on the reverse of the coin, which would suggest that it was more important to Anastasios to have his image as an emperor experienced in military matters disseminated to the public. Yet it must be kept in mind that these were 'exceptional commemorative issues' and as such would likely not have been seen by the public at large.[22]

This coin type had been in existence, with a variety of figures, since at least the late second century: the earliest representations of a couple being approved of and protected by a deity probably had Juno as the central figure. This figure evolved into Concordia by the late second century, as seen with the marriage coin of Marcus Aurelius and the younger Faustina, and then again with the marriage coin of Caracalla and Plautilla in the third century.[23] By 437, the pagan imagery had disappeared, and Theodosios II replaced Concordia as the central figure, giving his approval of the marriage of his daughter Licinia Eudoxia to Valentinian III (fig.1.27).[24]

---

[21] *DOC I*, cat.2.
[22] Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', p.581.
[23] E. H. Kantorowicz, 'On the Golden Marriage Belt and the Marriage Rings of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection', *DOP* 14 (1960), pp.1-16, pp.4-8. For Marcus Aurelius and Faustina, see H. Mattingly & E. A. Sydenham, *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol III: Antoninus Pius to Commodus* (London, 1930): *RIC III*, cat.441 (Marcus Aurelius). For Caracalla and Plautilla, see *RIC IV.I*, cat.213 (Caracalla).
[24] *RIC X*, cat.267 (Theodosios II, East).

There was also a recent precedent for the marriage coin of Ariadne and Anastasios: the *augusta* Pulcheria married Marcian after the death of her brother Theodosios II in 450, and thus Marcian was elevated to the imperial dignity – they issued a coin which celebrated their union on the reverse and depicted Marcian in military garb on the obverse (fig.1.28).[25] Ariadne and Anastasios' issue of nearly forty years later was created in almost exactly the same iconographic manner as Marcian and Pulcheria's coin. This suggests that the marital coin was an imperial convention, but perhaps one that was only acted upon in times of tension. When the Western Roman emperor, Valentinian III and Licinia Eudoxia married with Theodosius' approval, that this coin was issued may have indicated that Rome, as a distant seat of power, was portraying the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire as approving and actively blessing their union. It also underlined the familial links that now connected the three figures, thus uniting the imperial families of the Eastern and Western Roman Empires.

The comparison between the two figures of Pulcheria and Ariadne, and their contexts is telling. On the deaths of Theodosios II and Zeno, with no heir in the picture, Pulcheria and Ariadne both stood a chance of either keeping imperial power as the *augusta* or potentially having it taken away from them by a rival claimant. Thus, they selected suitable men to marry, to ensure that they kept their status, their imperial authority, and to ensure that the line of imperial power stayed within the family; these coins could thus have been struck to underscore that they had done so. In the reciprocal terms, these coins also underlined that it was the empresses, both Pulcheria and Ariadne, that

[25] *RIC X*, cat.502 (Marcian).

legitimised their husbands, Marcian and Anastasios respectively, as the emperor; it was their imperial bloodline that transferred authority to the male rulers. This coin was also a symbol of the acceptance and divine approval of this union and the accession of Marcian and Anastasios to imperial power.

These latter two *solidi* were the Christianised versions of a tradition that had developed over at least three centuries, with the pagan and later imperial central figure becoming superseded by Christ.[26] Additionally, these unions were political advantages for the male counterparts, thus the coins symbolised the transference of legitimacy from the females – through Pulcheria to Marcian, and through Ariadne to Anastasios – by way of marriage, which, again, was portrayed as being divinely approved. It can be seen over the course of the last century, that there is a direct change in the way that empresses were being portrayed: in the fifth century, it was deemed appropriate, though only on single-issue coins and not widely disseminated coinage, for the empress to be associated directly with the figure of Christ, as was the emperor, though she does take the position of least honour. When comparing the representations of Helena and Ariadne, it should also be noted that costume of the empress is also different. There is little chance that the regalia of the empress in the fifth century could be confused with that of a noble woman and certainly indicated her distinct office, a far cry from the simple diadem of Helena's representation.[27]

[26] See G. Vikan, 'Art and Marriage in Early Byzantium', *DOP* 44 (1990), pp.145-63, for further discussion on the representations of marriage ceremonies within material culture, particularly on wedding rings.
[27] Fejfer, *Roman Portrait*, pp.347-9, 354-359; James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.44-5.

2.2 Carved Representations: Ivory Diptychs and Panels

As with Helena and other Late Antique empresses, extant imagery of Ariadne can sometimes be difficult to identify. However, in the case of Ariadne, it was not just the medium of coins but also consular diptychs which can, without much hesitation, be positively identified as bearing her image. That being said, examples of coins minted in her name are extremely rare, as shown above. Yet, there are six consular diptychs which are known for certain to have the image of Ariadne on them, though a few are severely damaged and one is lost entirely, with only a drawing of it remaining. In this section, I shall also examine two further ivory plaques which, although certainly representing an empress of the fifth or sixth century, are variously identified as Pulcheria, Ariadne, and Sophia.

2.2.1 Consular Diptychs

It has been suggested that these diptychs were created with intention of being 'presentation objects' for select groups, such as the family and friends of the newly-made consul, or fellow officials, senators or the imperial family, and would have been displayed in the public part of the recipients' homes.[28] This, of course, suggests a fairly limited and elite audience – unlike that of the common base-metal coinage, and the audience was likely more exclusive than gold coinage – but an empress' inclusion on a luxury item such as this also implies her importance in the hierarchy of the Byzantine state. Further underlining this point, there is no extant consular diptych that depicted an image of the emperor

[28] Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, p.1.

but excluded the empress.[29] Through this medium then, one can certainly see the privileged and authorial position that the empress held.

The consular diptych of Flavius Taurus Clementius is the first extant example of a consular diptych with the image of a Byzantine empress on it (fig.1.29). Now held in the World Museum, Liverpool, the Clementius diptych consists of two carved ivory panels joined together, which celebrate the promotion of Clementius to consul in 513.[30] The two leaves of the diptych are practically identically decorated and hold only minor stylistic variations, though the two inscriptions are different.[31] Clementius is seated on a stool decorated with lion heads and feet; in his right hand is a *mappa*, used to begin the consular games at the start of his year in office, and in his left is a sceptre with an embellishment at the top, which has been argued represents the bust of the emperor.[32] The consul is flanked by the personifications of Rome and Constantinople and in the lower register, youths pour out the rich contents of two sacks of largesse – coins, ingots and laurel leaves.[33]

The upper register is of particular interest as it holds the image of both the empress and the emperor; the busts of the imperial couple are encircled in two medallions, on either side of a cross (fig.1.29a). These two images must represent Ariadne and Anastasios as they were in power during the consulship of Clementius. Ariadne is portrayed as wearing a 'tall coronet-shaped diadem' with two *pendilia* hanging down from each side of her head, and with her hair

[29] James, *Empresses and Power*, p.135.
[30] My thanks go to the World Museum, Liverpool, and Dr Georgina Muskett for permission to study Clementius' consular diptych (M10036).
[31] Gibson, *Liverpool Ivories*, p.19. Left diptych: FL TAVRVS CLEMENTINVS ARMONIVS CLEMENTINVS. Right diptych: VIL COM SACR LARC EXCONS PATRIC ETCONS ORDIN.
[32] Gibson, *Liverpool Ivories*, p.19.
[33] Gibson, *Liverpool Ivories*, p.19.

bound by five double-loops of pearls; she also wears a collar heavy with jewellery and large, teardrop shaped earrings.[34] Both medallions are the same size and flank the symbol of Christ, at an equal height and distance from the cross.

As with portraiture on coins, the hierarchical structure is expressed through the placement of the images; the senior image is always placed on the right which, from a viewer's perspective, therefore places them on the left – if there is a third party, the most important is placed in the centre.[35] Thus, Anastasios is on the left, and Ariadne on the right, with the cross, the symbol of Christ, taking up the space in the centre. This positioning represented not only the imperial couple ruling jointly in the name of Christ, but also their divinely ordained reign. The empress' costume is extremely rich and is more opulent than Anastasios', whose decoration is limited to his diadem, *pendilia* and the fibula near his shoulder. This is a dramatic change from earlier Byzantine empresses such as Helena who, as noted previously, were largely indistinguishable from other elite women. Olovsdotter has noted that the facial features of Clementius bear a striking resemblance to the consuls Orestes and Aerobindus on their diptychs, which would suggest that these depictions are 'types rather than individual physiognomies'.[36] If that is the case with the images of the consuls, it is likely that it would also be true for the images of the empresses, and indeed the emperors. Thus, we may assume that Ariadne's

[34] Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, p.46.
[35] See L. Brubaker, 'Gender and Gesture', in A. Olsen Lam & R. Schroeder (eds.), *The Eloquence of Art: Essays in Honour of Henry Maguire* (Abingdon, 2020), pp.47-70, for further discussion on the importance and meaning of positioning.
[36] Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, pp.46-7.

image here is idealised; the audience is expected to recognise her and her office of empress from her placement and her ornamentation.

Anthemius was promoted to the office of consul in 515 and he also had an ivory diptych created to commemorate his inauguration.[37] Although this piece is now lost, an engraving of the ivory survives, which gives some indication to the portrayal of the empress in the upper register. It is unclear as to whether this piece was commissioned before or after Ariadne's death.[38] However, due to Ariadne's death in the year of his consulship, that there was no daughter that could be elevated, and that Anastasios did not marry again after he was widowed, there was no other empress in this year, so the ivory must depict Ariadne. There are three medallions, arranged in a loose triangle, in the space above the depiction of the consul; the emperor Anastasios is at the highest point of the section, with a male figure to his bottom right and Ariadne occupying the space to the bottom left. Due to the male figure's costume it has been suggested that it is meant to represent the father of the consul, also named Anthemius, who was the eastern consul in 455 and the western *augustus* from 467-472.[39] Thus, the medallions may have directly represented the hierarchy of Byzantine society, with the current emperor occupying the top position and the empress being on par with high officials. Olovsdotter has suggested that, because Ariadne is on the right side of the emperor, from the audience's viewpoint, she must be in a position of honour and first in rank after him.[40] However, if this was indeed the case, it would also suggest that the

[37] The engraving was created by Héron de Villefosse: Olovsdotter *Consular Image*, plate 15; R. Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin & Leipzig, 1929), Taf. 17.
[38] Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, p.116.
[39] Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, p.117.
[40] Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, p.121.

empress is in a position of honour in relation to the cross, as the emperor is on the left from the viewer's perspective, in the Clementius diptych, which seems highly unlikely. It is more probable, as she also suggests, that there is a symmetry here that makes it impossible to determine if there is a 'hierarchic differentiation'.[41] This then suggests that though the empress is not equal to the emperor, neither is she below any other official; her office holds a distinct and significant place within the hierarchy.

The consul in 517 was Anastasios and he commissioned at least four copies of his consular diptych to celebrate his elevation to the office. Although two of the copies are not whole, with one being preserved through a single leaf (C) and only the lower register of another copy surviving (D), the other two diptychs are largely intact, with one in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (A) and the other (B) split into two – whereas the left panel is still in London, the right panel disappeared in Berlin after World War II.[42] On all of the remaining sections of Anastasios' panels (A-C), the frontal-facing bust of Ariadne is again in the upper register, at the bottom of a triangular formation, with the emperor above her and a male figure to the side, similar in layout to the Anthemius diptych. Compared with the Clementius diptych, Ariadne's medallion does not depict her as particularly elaborately dressed, though her regalia does obviously indicate her identity as the empress. She again has a diadem with *pendilia* hanging from both sides, though there is not as much detail at the top of the head, and a similar hairstyle bound with double-strands of pearls, yet her

[41] Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, p.121.
[42] A. *BnF,* Inv. 55, MMA (fully-extant diptych); B. Berlin, former Antiquarium (Antikensammlung) (Right panel, now missing) and Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. 368-1871 (extant left panel); C. Biblioteca Capitolare, Paris (single leaf); D. Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (one section of the lower register).

jewelled collar is much less elaborate.[43] Thus, although the images of Ariadne in these diptychs are not individualised, and represent her role as empress, there are differences between the two. Ariadne was certainly deceased by this point as well, which suggests that it was her official role of empress that was required here, as an 'intrinsic part' of the hierarchy.[44] Although given a secondary role in these diptychs, as can be inferred from the difference in size – the main focus being the newly-promoted consul – the imperial medallions are placed in the top register which proclaimed their superior status, yet nonetheless created an imperial link for the consul.[45] As for the male figure in the third medallion, it has been suggested that it was an image of Pompeius who was, again, the father of the consul and an ex-consul himself (501); he was in fact a close relative of the emperor, and his image was probably placed there to draw attention to Anastasios' consular and imperial connections.[46]

2.2.2 The Anonymous Ivory Panels

Though not certainly identifiable as Ariadne, two ivory panels – one now in Vienna, the other in Florence – are thought to represent the empress. The panel in Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (fig.1.30), portrays a woman enthroned in an ornamental niche surmounted by eagles, holding a *globus cruciger* in her left hand with her right palm held forward at elbow height; she wears a diadem and earrings, her hair covered by a 'snood' which supported *pendilia*.[47] It is very similar to the bust medallions seen on the diptychs already

[43] Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, p.48.
[44] James, *Empresses and Power*, p.136.
[45] Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, p.114.
[46] Olovsdotter, *Consular Image*, p.121.
[47] Breckenridge, cat.25, in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, p.31.

discussed. Her attire consists of a tunic, jewelled collar and shoes, and a chlamys which has upon it a *tablion*, containing a portrait.[48] The panel in Bargello Museo, Florence is similar iconographically but does differ in some ways (fig.1.31); the empress is upright and carries a sceptre in her left hand, with the *globus cruciger* in the other.[49] It has been argued that these panels were originally meant to have been pieces with two leaves, as both panels are damaged on the right hand side, with what could be signs of a hinge.[50] It is likely that the portrait on the *tablion* of the empress resembled the imperial consul – and in his role as consul, it also represented the emperor – and therefore linked the empress to the imperial hierarchy and her position within it; it may imply her dependence on this structure, for her position as empress, or to remind those who view these pieces that it is she – if it was indeed Ariadne – that legitimises the emperor.[51] These images have been identified as Ariadne owing to the carving being 'characteristic of Constantinopolitan work' that occurred during her lifetime and also because of its close similarities to the medallion busts on the consular diptychs.[52] The panels have also been identified as other empresses during the fifth and sixth century. For instance, by comparing the coinage and the historical context with the plaques, McClanan has argued that they depict Sophia.[53] In terms of regalia, stylistically

[48] Breckenridge, cat.25, Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, p.31.
[49] James, *Empresses and Power*, p.136. Verina was the first empress to be shown carrying a sceptre, at least numismatically, which gives us a *termus post quem* iconographically: Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, p.188; *RIC X*, cat.713-8 (Leo I, East).
[50] E. Rubery, 'The Vienna 'Empress' Ivory and its Companion in Florence: Crowned in Different Glories?', in A. Eastmond & L. James (eds.), *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2013), pp.99-114 , p.111.
[51] James, *Empresses and Power*, p.139, 142.
[52] Breckenridge, cat.25, in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, pp.30-1; James, *Empresses and Power*, p.139; n. 13; D. N. Angelova, 'The Ivories of Ariadne and Idea about Female Imperial Authority in Rome and Early Byzantium', *Gesta* 43.1 (2004), pp.1-15.
[53] McClanan, *Representations*, pp.168-75, 184: because of her role in Justin II's tenure it was Sophia, not Ariadne, who 'warranted enthronement'.

and iconographically, this panel does fit in with Ariadne's time period, when compared to contemporary coin representations and, as said, other ivory carvings, though specific identifications are likely beyond the remit of art history, as this figure was certainly an idealised version of the office of the empress in the fifth and sixth century.

It has been noted that as well as having a smaller pearl collar, the headpiece of the Vienna ivory is also smaller and simpler in its ornamentation, with Rubery arguing that it does not actually constitute a crown at all: it is therefore probable that the Florence ivory depicted a woman of a higher status than the Vienna piece.[54] Rubery examines these ivories by comparing them images to the *Book of Ceremonies*; it can be seen that the Vienna ivory has similarities in insignia to the ceremonies of the *nobilissimus*, such as the gold trefoils and the non-purple chlamys, while the Florence ivory has similarities to the ensemble mentioned in the coronation of an *augusta*, from the veil hanging across the back of the right shoulder, to the stained reddish-brown of the chlamys and the crown, with the *pendilia* that she wears.[55] Rubery suggests that the Vienna ivory may have been created slightly before Leo II's sole reign, while Ariadne was a *nobilissima* – it was her infant son who had the authority to elevate her to the title of *augusta* – whilst the Florence ivory may have been commissioned after she was became the *augusta*, and should thus be dated to after 474. [56] However, as the *Book of Ceremonies* was created around half a millennium later, with an aspirational element to its compilation – the rules laid out within indicated what the author hoped would take place – it could

[54] Rubery, 'The Vienna Empress Ivory', pp.102-4.
[55] Rubery, 'The Vienna Empress Ivory', pp.104-8. For the coronation of the *augusta: BOC I,* R204-7.
[56] Rubery, 'The Vienna Empress Ivory', pp.110-1.

certainly be argued that this argument is on shaky ground; the two distinctly different media, in both type and chronology, should not be compared in any meaningful way.

The heavy emphasis of the Florence ivory on the regalia and other symbols of imperial rule may also reflect the difficulties that Ariadne and Zeno faced during their reign, such as the claims by Marcian that his wife – Ariadne's younger sister – Leontia was better suited to be empress as she was born during Leo's tenure as emperor and therefore was the only real purple-born daughter: this ivory could be a result of his defeat and the subsequent second consulship of Zeno in 479.[57] This ivory then could have been a display of Ariadne's explicit support for her husband, especially meaningful if the portrait in the *tablion* was of him.

Oddly, Rubery does not consider Anastasios at all in her interpretation of the ivories. If her analysis of the two panels mirroring different periods in Ariadne's life were correct, then the Florence ivory could have been commissioned during the period of Anastasios' accession to imperial power. He had no claims to his newly acquired status, as it was through Ariadne and her purple blood that he gained legitimacy as the emperor. This ivory, therefore, could have been in response to a need to legitimise his rule and also in response to the designs of Longius on Anastasios' throne, after the death of his brother, Zeno.[58] This would also tie in with the production of the coin type which commemorated their union; Ariadne's image was being consistently used to represent their legitimacy together.

[57] Rubery, 'The Vienna Empress Ivory', p.111.
[58] Theophanes, AM 5983, p.208.

Yet, there is no concrete proof that this was meant to represent Ariadne, and all that can definitely be said is that the plaques depicted an imperial woman from the late fifth to sixth century, dated on stylistic grounds. These ivories are still meaningful within the context of this case study, however, as they clearly show a shift in the portrayal of the empress, developing alongside the representations in the consular diptychs. Again, the development of the imperial regalia has now turned into a more ornate version of its former self. The symbols of power that permeate throughout these ivories do particularly signpost the distinct office of the empress, and also shows that it was appropriate for the office to be displayed as such, at least, within the semi-private sphere where it was likely to have been situated. As Angelova has argued the tradition of showing the empress as the mother, and even as a woman, has been 'obliterated' in these two ivories, setting aside dynastic concerns and leaving only the Christian, 'victorious sovereign'.[59] Regardless of the intended identity of the empresses in these diptychs, this representation then suits the purposes of the fifth- and sixth-century empress; the indication of their divine favour, imperial victory, and, for some, as focal points of legitimacy for imperial rule in their own right.

2.3 Statuary

A marble head, found in Rome but now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, which likely belonged to a life-sized statue has also been posited to be an image

[59] Angelova, 'The Ivories of Ariadne', pp.8-10. In the earlier section of her article, she outlines the two major aspects of the representations of Roman and Late Antique empresses, via a variety of media: childbirth and imperial victory. She argues that Flaccilla in 383 was the first whose image did not explicitly refer to childbirth or fecundity generally, and this trend continues from there.

of Ariadne (fig.1.32). The head possess a frontal stare, with drilled irises, and the face is full and rounded.[60] Breckenridge identified the marble head as Ariadne due to the elaborate hairstyle; he argued that the 'snood'-covered hair was a natural progression from the Theodosian practice of covering the hair with a veil or cap, which had evolved into the 'stiff bonnet' of Ariadne complete with a double row of pearls, a similar style being found in the ivory panels.[61] However there is no obvious way to definitively identify this head as Ariadne. Though it is stylistically comparable to the depictions on both the ivory panels and the consular diptychs, these images of 'Ariadne', identifiable or otherwise, are also similar to the image of Amalasuntha, the regent in Ostrogothic Italy for her infant son in the early- to mid-sixth century, on another consular diptych of Rufius Gennadius Probus Orestes in 530.[62] James also argued this, and drew comparisons with the consular diptych of Justin in 540 (fig.1.44) – which must have represented Theodora and Justinian – to indicate how similar the portraiture was.[63]

On a related side note for the representation on this consular diptych, the male figure on this diptych is thought to be Amalasuntha's son, Athalaric; although he was depicted in the position of honour, he was much less elaborately dressed than his mother. It could be that Amalasuntha was depicted in more elaborate regalia to indicate her powerful status as regent: as these diptychs were commissioned to be viewed by semi-private audiences, possibly between patrons – perhaps even between regent and consul – a point was being made about her perceived status. Additionally, as Amalasuntha

[60] Breckenridge, cat.24, in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, pp.30-1.
[61] Breckenridge, cat.24, in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, p.30.
[62] Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. 139-1866.
[63] James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.135-6.

could not rightly claim to be a 'Byzantine empress', but was instead a regent of a polity within the Byzantine sphere, that she was depicted here in such detail, appropriating full imperial regalia, easily comparable to late fifth- and sixth-century representations, was certainly significant. The image and regalia of the office of the empress must have been so well-known and distinct within the cultural landscapes of Byzantium and the transformed political sphere of the Italian peninsula, that her adoption of this regalia was accepted and appropriate to her regency and played into the perception of power that was being constructed. Due to the context of Amalasuntha's tenuous regency, it could also be argued that these symbols of power needed to be emphasised. That the office of the empress was also a part of the hierarchical structure alongside the emperor is also further underlined: despite the unusual situation of the child-ruler and his mother – rather than a husband and wife – wherein Amalasuntha was clearly the authority, it was still appropriate within the conventions of these diptychs to show both of the offices together, side by side.

In terms of statuary however, as discussed in the case study of Helena, these images were generic and idealised, and stylistic patterns can normally only assist in recognising what time period the image originates from, rather than a specific individual. Again, it does, however, show that the empress was becoming a distinct entity from other elite women; there would have been no confusion that this image depicted the imperial office. Empresses, or those who would claim the imperial office, could use this change to their advantage or, it could be argued, it was slowly changing to suit the purposes and functions of the office of the empress as it too developed.

2.4 Steel-Yard Weights

To ensure fair trade, weights were in use in the Late Antique and early Byzantine period; although there were examples of simple geometric shapes, counterparts of weighing methods began to evolve into figural shapes, especially for larger trade. By far, the largest figural group was that of women, portraying either representations of the empress or representations of Athena-Minerva.[64] These idealised figures, which largely included the head, chest, and arms, functioned by having a circular hook atop their heads with a rod fitted through to measure against tradeable goods.[65] Though several scholars have written about these steel-yard weights and attempted to ascribe identities to those in imperial regalia, no convincing conclusions have been drawn. There have been suggestions ranging from Aelia Pulcheria and Aelia Eudokia to the Western Roman empresses, Licinia Eudoxia and Galla Placidia, and some scholars ventured empresses as late as Verina and Ariadne.[66] However, as with the examples of statuary examined within earlier sections of this thesis, I would agree with McClanan and James that these steel-yard weights portrayed the office of the empress, rather than specific empresses.[67]

So much for specific identity. However, more can be gleaned from this medium; what can the idealised image tell us specifically, and why were these figures considered appropriate for this function? It has been convincingly

---

[64] The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, has seven such steel-yard weights: three represent empresses – 1980.416a,b; 67.154.1; 69.10 – and four represent Athena – 67.154.1; 59.184; 89.4.3493; 61.112. One instance has been argued to portray Isis – X.378.
[65] H. Evans, 'The Arts of Byzantium', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 58.4 (2001), pp.113-20, p.16.
[66] McClanan, *Representations*, p.30 provides an overview of the scholarship on steelyard weights and their identifications. For identification as Ariadne, see M. Tatic-Djuric 'L'archéologie byzantine au XIIe Congrès internationale des études byzantines d'Ochrid', *Byz* 31.2 (1961), pp.537-54, p.548.
[67] Both James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.115-7, and McClanan, *Representations*, pp.41-7, come to this conclusion also.

argued that the appearance of the empress was supposed to indicate the standardised weight of the figure; she represented the approval of the state for the veracity of the transaction taking place.[68] The use of the empress' image may have also acted as a reminder to both sides of the transaction – both vendor and buyer – to act in a trustworthy manner, as the eyes of the office of the state were watching: a kind of apotropaic function against fraudulent practices. The figure was the embodiment of the portrayed, or indeed, the office that they were representing.[69] Additionally, as well as indicating the figure's status, the jewellery also demonstrated the wealth and prosperity of the state. In her left hand, the steel-yard weight empress held either a scroll or a *mappa*,[70] one of the only contexts in which the empress is consistently shown with this consular symbol. This would suggest that it is more likely that this iconographic aspect was intended to represent a scroll. The scroll was often held by Late Antique elite women in portraiture of varying media, as an indication of their education and cultural learnedness, and thus also their status and wealth.[71] Turning from the usual shift away from representations of elite women, these depictions of the empress are thus comparable with elite female representations such as the bust of a noble woman now held in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which also holds a scroll.[72] The office of the empress, therefore, was also part of a long tradition of elite women, which placed emphasis on their education and learnedness, further imbuing the office

[68] McClanan, *Representations*, pp.63-4.
[69] For figural representations as being the embodiment of their subject, see Elsner, 'Perspectives', p.264.
[70] McClanan, *Representations*, pp.43-5.
[71] McClanan, *Representations*, p.45. The learned woman holding the scroll seems to be more often seen in funerary contexts, though this could be due to the preponderance of female representations within these particular contexts than in comparison with others: Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, pp.333-51; Breckenridge, cat.272, in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, pp.292-5.
[72] Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 66.25.

of the empress with these traits. That the office of the empress was displayed to function as a weight also indicated the expectation of their learnedness in terms of fair judgement.

With the exception of Late Antique coins, steel-yard weights are the only time that the historical record provides evidence for the physical depiction of the empress as a sole entity. Even when discussing statues, Byzantine authors tended to identify empresses as being part of larger familial groups, often within the contexts of imperially patronised areas – such as that of Helena in the previous chapter – or as part of an imperial couple. Hence, what can be seen here is the representation of the office of the empress in its final transformative phase in the late fourth to fifth century. Though it is distinct from an elite woman – through the indicators of the diadem, elaborate hairstyle, and jewellery – the female figure still carried the scroll which indicated education, wealth, and status, and so might still be associated with elite women, but was certainly becoming more easily distinguishable by its costume and contextual use.

2.5 Literary Representations

As in the case of Helena, there are also records of the statues of Ariadne that may have existed. In the early eighth century, the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* claimed that, on the Chalke Gate of the palace, there were standing statues of Ariadne and Zeno on pillars, with 'iambic inscriptions arranged by Secundus the philosopher'.[73] The author also says of Ariadne that she was

[73] *Parastaseis*, ch.80.

'eventually chaste but earlier shameless'.[74] As this is an oddly negative portrayal of an empress, with little corroboration for seemingly negative behaviour from contemporary sources, it was suggested by Cameron and Herrin that the author was in fact alluding to Theodora, a statue of whom featured in the next chapter of the *Parastaseis*.[75] However, there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case, other than the circumstantial placement of chapters within *Parastaseis*, and no indication that the authors of the *Parastaseis* were aware of Theodora's negative reputation that we see repeated today, influenced by the writings of Prokopios of Caesarea.

In an earlier chapter, the *Parastaseis* mentioned images of Zeno and Ariadne on the same gate: it is probable that this is a duplication rather than another statue group.[76] The author also states that Zeno had a wife after Ariadne, which is unlikely in the extreme as it was not mentioned in any other source and Ariadne outlived Zeno by over two decades; it is much more probable that this statue of Arkadia was Zeno's first wife.[77] As was often the occasion with this text, there are duplications of statues, or they are either mislabelled or have incorrect anecdotes attached to them – this statue may have been of Ariadne, Arkadia, or of another imperial or elite woman entirely. Unlike with the representation of Helena, whose presence was indicated by the association with the image of the True Cross, the *Parastaseis* therefore does not help a modern audience place any statues which were thought to be Ariadne within the urban topography of Constantinople. All that it can indicate is that

[74] *Parastaseis*, ch.80.
[75] Cameron & Herrin, *Parastaseis*, p.271.
[76] *Parastaseis*, ch.32.
[77] *Parastaseis*, ch.32.

the authors of the *Parastaseis* were aware of her existence, though they were not well-informed about her life, either in terms of action, family, or reputation.

Marcellinus Comes, in his *Chronicle*, wrote that there was a statue of Ariadne in Constantinople, but this one stood alongside a statue of Anastasios, both of which were bound with ropes and dragged through the streets of the city during a riot; a way of clearly and violently expressing public dissatisfaction with the imperial couple.[78] Marcellinus was a late fifth-, early sixth-century author, who died around two decades after Ariadne. It is therefore entirely likely that he may have borne witness to the riot involving this statue, or had, at least, seen the two in their urban landscape. Through this source, it can therefore be seen that Constantinople did play host to an imperial statue couple, until they were removed by a mob.

2.5.1 Mosaics and the Virgin Mary

There is also evidence to suggest that there was a mosaic of Ariadne and her family in the Church of the Blachernae. There are many opposing views on the origins of this church. It has been argued by some, such as Holum, that Pulcheria was responsible for building churches in honour of the Virgin Mary, including the Blachernae.[79] Mango, on the other hand, has disagreed with this, claiming that 'it is in [his] opinion unhistorical' that the churches at Blachernae, Chalkoprateia, and Hodegoi have been attributed to Pulcheria.[80]

---

[78] Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen (Berlin, 1894), trans. B. Croke, *The Chronicle of Marcellinus: A Translation and Commentary,* BA 7 (Sydney, 1995): Marcellinus, 493.

[79] Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, p.142. Holum's evidence for this comes from Theodoros Anagnostos, a lector for Hagia Sophia, in the sixth century, though he admits that this is only the most reliable out of an obscure history.

[80] Mango, 'Constantinople as Theotokoupolis', p.17. See also C. Mango, 'The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine at Constantinople', in N. Cambi & E. Marin (eds.), *Radovi XIII*

The church is likely to have been built sometime after 431, after the Virgin's official upgrade in status to the Theotokos, agreed at the Council of Ephesus. A tenth-century document described Leo and Veronica as honouring the garment of the Virgin by dedicating a church to her and placing the relic in a golden casket.[81] In this same church, the imperial couple also commissioned a mosaic featuring the Virgin Mary enthroned in a central position, with Leo I stood on one side and Verina – named 'Veronica' in this text – kneeling on the other, holding a baby boy – here identified as 'her own son, the young emperor Leo' – and their daughter Ariadne.[82]

It has been assumed by previous scholars, such as Mango, that the child was actually Ariadne's son – Leo II – and the original text was merely mistaken.[83] Lane Fox, however, has argued for the child being the son of Verina and Leo I, as Leo II does not readily belong in this scene, especially as the child is being held by Verina.[84] This child was mentioned in the *Vita of Daniel the Stylite* as a result of Leo I asking the holy man to bless them with a son and heir, which he then did.[85] Although other sources do not mention this child, a contemporary horoscope states that a 'child of a king' was born in Byzantium – the child may have been born in April 463 and lived for only five and a half

---

Medunarodnog Kongressa za Starokršćansku Arheologiju II. Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae II: Split-Poreč. 25.9.-I. 10.1994. Vol 2 (Rome & Split, 1998), pp.61-76. Angelova, *Sacred Founder*, p.179, claims that Verina and Leo must have built the chapel which housed the mosaic (and relic of the Virgin Mary, brought to Constantinople in 473), and that Justin I was responsible for the building of the church.

[81] Cod. Paris.gr.1447, fol.257-8, as trans. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, pp.34-5.

[82] Mango, 'The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine', pp.70-1.

[83] Cod. Paris.gr.1447, fol.257-8, as trans. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p.35. Angelova, *Sacred Founders,* p.179, agrees with this intepretation of the family mosaic.

[84] R. Lane Fox, 'The Life of Daniel', in M. J. Edwards & S. Swain (eds.), *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1997), pp.175-226, p.190. For arguments for Leo II as the one being portrayed, see Mango, 'The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine', pp.70-1; Mango 'Theotokoupolis', pp.17-25.

[85] *Vita S. Danielis Stylitae*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Subsidia hagiographica* 14 (Paris, 1923), trans. E. Dawes & N. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver* (Oxford, 1948): *VDan.*, 30.

months.[86] Lane Fox also suggests that this mosaic was commissioned after the death of this son, the figures therefore interceding for the child's well-being.[87] That this was the son of Leo I and Verina is problematic as, if this was the case, where is the younger daughter of the imperial couple, Leontia? However, as it is Verina who holds the child, in front of the Virgin Mary, I would agree that this baby is Verina's son. If this mosaic was commissioned before the premature death of the baby, this mosaic would have created a message of divine approval for the new dynasty, suggesting that the Virgin was safeguarding the continuation of Leo's line by protecting and blessing his new heir. Should this mosaic have been commissioned after the death of their new son, it would serve not only the purpose of commemorating the child, but also underlining the pious nature of the imperial family. Irrespective of the identity of the child, the mosaic affirmed the imperial patronage of the shrine; the relic held within would only have added to their prestige and pious reputation of the family. It is interesting that a mosaic of the imperial family has been recorded, as there are no comparative materials until at least the late-sixth century, though this could be because the next few imperial families did not have children.[88]

This description is also significant in terms of the change of the Virgin during this period. After the Council of Ephesus in 431, evidence for the development of the cult of the Virgin Mary can be seen, especially within visual culture.[89] As well as this mosaic, another was set up in the triumphal arch of

---

[86] Lane Fox, 'Life of Daniel', p.189.
[87] Lane Fox, 'Life of Daniel', p.190.
[88] To my knowledge, the next extant familial portraiture was on the base metal coin types of Maurice (582-602) over a century later, portraying Constantina and their son, Theodosios (fig.1.38). However, it is possible that this was because subsequent imperial families did not have children. It was suggested that Justin II and Sophia had a daughter, Arabia, but this was only recorded in the *Parastaseis*, ch.94-5, and thus is unlikely to be true.
[89] Av. Cameron, 'The Early Cult of the Virgin', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens & Milan, 2000), pp.3-15, p.5.

the Church of Saint Maria Maggiore, Rome, where scenes from the early life of Christ can be seen, with the Virgin featuring prominently and presented as an empress in her role as Maria Regina.[90] This representation of the Virgin Mary showed distinct similarities between the Virgin's costume and that of fifth-century empresses in the Eastern Roman Empire. It may be that the Virgin Mary in Leo and Verina's mosaic was represented as much the same, or at least was receiving greater prominence than in previous years.[91] Thus, the imperial family were portraying themselves with not only a central image of the Virgin, in accordance with of the Council, but the representations were also accompanied by what would become one of her most famous relics. In associating themselves with the Virgin during her rise in popularity from the early fifth century, the imperial family were displaying themselves as a pious family and supporting the Virgin's newly-developed status.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the images of Ariadne have consistently been linked to the various positions in the imperial family that she held: the daughter of an emperor, the mother and then regent of an emperor and the wife to two emperors. Through the connection of the first, she enabled the rise to power of three men – her son, Leo II, and her husbands, Zeno and Anastasios.

---

[90] We can also see an example of Maria Regina in the apse at Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome (fig.53) For further discussion on the iconography of the Maria Regina, see M. Lidova, 'The Imperial Theotokos: Revealing the Concept of Early Christian Imagery in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome', *Convivium* 2.2 (2015), pp.60-81.

[91] Herrin does not agree that the Maria Regina image originated in the East, and instead argues that the Western image of Maria Regina developed to replace the empresses of the Western Roman Empire; there was no space for a transformation like that to occur in the East because of the visibility of the empresses there: J. Herrin, 'The Imperial Feminine in Byzantium', *Past and Present* 169 (2000), pp.3-35, p.16.

Without Ariadne transferring legitimacy first through her bloodline and then through her assent to marriage, their individual ascent to imperial power would not have been possible. The mosaic created under Leo I and Verina showed those pictured as being deeply pious and having an affiliation with the Theotokos, as well as the portrayal of a strong and pious imperial family, possibly created with the suggestion of a new dynasty, but more likely commissioned to act as an intercessory agent on behalf of Ariadne's infant brother. The patronage of this religious institution and the association with the Virgin Mary linked contemporary Byzantine empresses with the model of Helena, which had been laid out for them to emulate.[92]

In a similar vein, the coins minted with Ariadne on the obverse depicted her as a pious *augusta* to layers of the social strata of the empire, though the scarcity of types and the lack of base-metal coinage may have meant that her image was restricted when it came to the least wealthy. The marriage coin of Anastasios and Ariadne, though created specifically to only be seen by few people, was another way of conveying legitimacy onto an emperor whose only claim to imperial status was through his new wife. This may also be one of the reasons why Ariadne may have appeared on consular diptychs alongside the emperor, even after her death. Overall, it is clear that the main impetus behind the creation of images of Ariadne was to enhance the idea that Ariadne was conferring legitimacy and authority onto the emperors during her reign as *augusta.* Though laid out in a different format – regalia, media, and associations

[92] Georgiou, 'Helena', pp.600-9. Helena was first association with the Virgin Mary by Ambrose, see Chapter One: Flavia Iulia Helena for further discussion.

– these tropes were also encapsulated in and comparable to the representations of Helena.

Chapter Three: Theodora

Reigning during the sixth century, the next case study will be on the polarising figure of Theodora (527-48). Theodora married Justinian (527-65) in c.525 and was acclaimed as empress together with him on the death of Justin I (518-27), his uncle.[1] Subject to the whims of contemporary sources, as usual, not much is known for sure about the early life of Theodora. Prokopios, in his infamous polemic, *Anekdota,* goes to great lengths to discredit Theodora, especially in terms of her early life and career: according to him, she was not only the low-born daughter of Akakios, the Master of the Bears in the Hippodrome, but she also performed on the stage.[2] Yet so poor were her skills in terms of music and dance that, to entertain, she had to rely on her sexual prowess and depravity which, according to Prokopios, knew no bounds.[3]

This work, with its risqué content matter and salacious portrayals of imperial figures, and thus entertaining appeal, has continually influenced perceptions of Theodora from Gibbon onwards, including Foss' equation of

---

[1] *Chron. Pasch.*, 616. See Appendix 1.3a.

[2] *Anekdota,* pp.36-7. Foss, on comparing *Anekdota* to other primary sources including the introduction of relevant law codes, concludes that though we cannot know for certain, it is likely that Theodora was an actress and therefore, likely also a sex worker: C. Foss, 'The Empress Theodora', *Byz* 72 (2002), pp.141-76, p.160.

[3] See *Anekdota,* pp.37-9, for details on Theodora's sexual showmanship and proclivities, including the particularly famous incident with the geese. Justinian was not spared verbal attacks either, but Prokopios goes to great lengths to outline Theodora's wanton behaviour, and her enjoyment of both sex and explicit performances. This clearly plays into gender conventions of this time; a woman who was unrestrained and actually enjoyed her sexuality, never mind displaying it openly, was certainly a negative trait in a period where modesty was a woman's key attribute. For analysis on the gendered approach taken by Prokopios in the *Secret History*, see Brubaker, 'Sex, Lies and Textuality', pp.83-101. Fisher has proven that scholarly interpretations of *Anekdota* as gossip to titillate, rather than salacious character assassination, are false. Looking comparatively at the way Prokopios portrays female figures in his other works, Fisher proves that *Anekdota* would have been unequivocally insulting within the context of sixth-century Byzantium: E. A. Fisher, 'Theodora and Antonina in the *Historia Arcana*: History and/or Fiction?', *Arethusa* 11.1 (1978), pp.253-79. Even Theodora's supposed sleeping patterns are used as a way to critique her – she is 'malevolently somnolent', sleeping for hours on end: P. E. Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln & London, 1994), p.7.

Theodora with Evita Peron.[4] Even modern academic work still falls prey to relying too heavily on Prokopios' vitriol. As recently as 2002, Evans reduced Theodora's imperial role as being due to Justinian's regard for her and her skill at 'titillating a middle-aged man', gained from her past experiences.[5] Whilst the significance of Justinian and Theodora's partnership should not be disregarded, we need to be careful that Prokopios' clear discontentment with his elite patrons and his literary skill does not influence our perception too heavily.[6]

There seems to be a common consensus that Theodora was not born into an aristocratic household. There is confirmation from several sources that the law was changed under Justin I to allow marriages between those of senatorial rank and actresses – with the proviso that they were repentant for their previous sins.[7] This, of course, is suggestive that Theodora was from this particular background, and that the law was changed to suit Justinian and Theodora's needs. That Theodora lived her early life in such an insatiable manner as Prokopios claims should certainly be subject to some doubt, but she

---

[4] E. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol IV* (London, 1788), ch.40.I; C. Diehl, *Théodora, impératrice de Byzance* (Paris, 1904); C. Foss, 'Theodora and Evita: Two Women in Power', in T. Sarolta & C. Sode (eds.), *Novum Millennium: Studies in Byzantine History and Culture Presented to Paul Speck* (Aldershot, 2001), pp.113-22.

[5] Evans, *The Empress Theodora*, p.118. Evans also claims here that, though women in the ancient Mediterranean were 'never without power', it was only through male failings in the Late Antique period that empresses were able to gain any power (as regents and domineering women), until Theodora. This is certainly a problematic line of argument. He also fails to bring Helena into this equation.

[6] See Foss, 'The Empress Theodora', pp.141-76, for his appraisal of Theodora in the sources outside of the *Anekdota*, and then the comparison of his findings to Prokopios' vitriolic representation. Though this approach is undoubtedly useful and allows us to engage with the span of different materials available, there are issues with Foss' critical use of the other source material, and he still gives the *Anekdota* some credibility, even without comparison: Foss, 'The Empress Theodora', pp.152, 159.

[7] This was laid down in the *Codex Iustinianus, Corpus Iuris Civilis*, ed. P. Krueger & T. Mommsen, 3 vols (Berlin, 1928-9): *Cod. Iust.,* V 4, 23. It was also mentioned in *Anekdota,* pp.41-2, with negative commentary to accompany it. Foss, 'The Empress Theodora', pp.160-1, for an examination of the sources on the law code, Theodora before she married Justinian, and her family. Foss also argues that she had a daughter from a previous (he assumes) marriage, and two grandsons, John and Athanasios: Foss, 'The Empress Theodora', p.143.

may well have been an actress and engaged in other pursuits to supplement her income. Less salubriously, the *Patria* suggests that Theodora was from Paphlagonia and, after coming to Constantinople, sold spun wool from the portico of the Church of Hagios Panteleemon to make a living.[8] The imperial couple had no children together, and on Justinian's death, Justin II (565-74), his nephew, became emperor with his wife Sophia (565-78), who may have been the niece of Theodora.[9] Theodora died several years before her husband, in 548, and Justinian ruled alone for the remainder of his life, though he seemed to keep the memory of Theodora with him.[10] Despite some association with religious controversy, both Theodora and Justinian are celebrated as saints in the Eastern Orthodox Church.[11]

Theodora was an obvious choice for this case study: the number of recorded representations, as well as the mosaic panel at San Vitale, Ravenna, make her an ideal candidate. She is also one of the most easily recognisable as an empress when compared with earlier representations. In full imperial regalia, she marks the zenith of the empress' evolving portraiture, and is thus a vital example for the study of this transition of the appearance of Late Antique imperial women. Though her patronage is usually discussed in terms of that which is 'appropriate' for a woman with a background like Theodora, it is clear

---

[8] *Patria*, 3.93. According to Berger, the *Patria* may have conflated her identity with that of Theodora, wife of Theophilos (829-42), who came from an aristocratic family in Paphlagonia.
[9] Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, pp.40-1, gives an overview of the sources and lands firmly on Sophia being her niece.
[10] Justinian died in 565 and so ruled for 17 years alone. See *BOC I*, R497-8, for Justinian entering Constantinople in 559 and lighting candles at Theodora's tomb in Holy Apostles, before being escorted by a ceremonial procession to and through the Mese.
[11] Both of their feast days are celebrated on 14th November in the Greek Orthodox Church, which is also recorded on this day in the liturgical calendar of Hagia Sophia: *Grande Église* pp.101-3, 45v-46r. The religious controversy refers to Theodora's suspected Monophysite sympathies, including a protected community in the Hormisdas Palace: John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints,* ed. E. W. Brooks *Patrologia Orientalis* 17 (Paris, 1923-6): John Eph., 676-681; J. Bardill, 'The Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople and the Monophysite Refugees', *DOP* 54 (2000), pp.1-11, pp.5-6.

from an interdisciplinary examination of the source material and recent scholarly work, that her patronage was much broader and more visible than previously thought.[12] This ties in with the themes of positioning and piety: the contexts, as well as the actual placement of her representation within mosaics, consular diptychs, and of monograms and epigraphy will also be discussed in this chapter. This will include the importance of spatial arrangements, and the placement of other figures. Theodora is particularly infamous for her portrayal in *Anekdota,* which has no doubt influenced the way modern audiences view her. This study seeks to take *Anekdota* out of the equation and view the messages conveyed by the series of her other representations to gauge more accurately the office of the empress in the sixth century.

With the exception of Helena, Theodora is one of the few empresses of Byzantium to have had much of an impact in the modern reception of the Byzantine Empire, appearing in popular culture largely through the guise of historical fiction.[13] As such, Theodora is not just an iconic figure of Byzantium, but also an important subject of study for the development of the representation of empresses. Other empresses in this century were not nearly as numerously represented as Theodora, although almost every woman who held the office after her – Sophia (fig.1.37), Ino-Anastasia (578-82), Constantia

[12] Thus the focus is usually on her philanthropy regarding repentant prostitutes, and her influence with Justinian and his laws regarding marriage and women of lower backgrounds: Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, pp.15-8.

[13] Theodora has been made the protagonist of at least four books of fiction within the past thirty years: G. Bradshaw, *The Bearkeeper's Daughter* (1987); S. Duffy, *Theodora: Actress, Empress, Whore* (2010) and *The Purple Shroud* (2012); S. Thornton, *The Secret History: A Novel of Empress Theodora* (2013). Her name is among 38 others which appear in the installation artwork piece *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago, Metropolitan Museum of Art (1979), which gave places to influential women through history. She appeared as a key character in the BBC TV documentary series *The Ascent of Women: Power* (2015), hosted by Dr Amanda Foreman. She has also appeared as the leader of the Byzantines in the popular video game *Civilisation V* (2010), and in *Total War: Attila. The Last Roman* (2015).

(582-602) (fig.1.38), and Leontia (602-10) (fig.1.39) –[14] was represented on coins, even though Theodora was not. Possible reasons as to why this omission occurred will be considered during this case study.

3.1 Mosaics

The imperial mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna have been a source of material for scholarly attention for many years. As such there are different interpretations as to what the figural mosaics in the apse of the church, the central characters of which are most usually identified as Justinian and Theodora, were actually created to depict. Inside the sanctuary apse of San Vitale, there is the apse mosaic of Christ the Redeemer framed by archangels, St Vitalis, and the patron of the church (fig.1.40); in the lower register of the sanctuary are two imperial panels, one of which focuses on the emperor (fig.1.41), the other of which focuses on the empress (fig.1.42). The two panels reflect each other in their composition: the central figure is that of the imperial figure, with members of their entourage surrounding them. Whereas Justinian has members of the clergy, high-ranking men, as indicated by their dress, and soldiers depicted in his panel, Theodora has only richly dressed women to her left, and male attendants who are leading them through a curtained entrance on her right. It has been argued that the two men to the left of Theodora are eunuchs, due to their beardless state, though this is certainly not a unanimous

[14] Examples of these types can be found in *BIFA* B1208, B2419, and B2497, though it should be noted that both Constantia and Ino-Anastasia only appeared on coins minted in Thessaloniki and were very infrequent. Justin and Sophia were also represented on the silver-gilt cross reliquary, the Crux Vaticana, now located in the Sancta Sanctorum, Vatican: a roundel representation of Justin takes the position of honour on the end of the cross' left arm (and thus, on 'right hand of God') and Sophia takes the secondary position on the right. See McClanan, *Representations*, pp.163-8, for further discussion.

interpretation; Tougher has noted that being bearded was not yet the stylistic norm for the empire in this period.[15] It would appear that each of the panels was representative of the separate courts with each of the main facets depicted: Justinian's consisted of military and patrician elements, alongside the clergy, whereas Theodora was accompanied by elite women and, possibly, eunuchs. It should also be noted that the patron responsible for these images was the local banker, Julianus Argentarius, and not the imperial couple or a member of their inner circle.[16]

3.1.1 Scholarship on San Vitale Mosaics

The main consensus, convincingly argued by Mathews, is that the mosaics show a liturgical procession; he specifically identifies the procession of the First Entrance of the liturgy, before the celebration of the Eucharist.[17] Von Simson convincingly surmised that the decorative schema of the mosaics within the basilica indicated a comprehensive offertory theme throughout; the Old Testament scenes are rife with sacrifices and donations to God and this follows through to the imperial panels, wherein the emperor and empress are taking

[15] Tougher also points out that there are men without beards in the Justinian panel on the opposite wall: S. Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2008), p.23. For those who argue that the figures are eunuchs and part of the empress' court, see I. Andreescu-Treadgold & W. Treadgold, 'Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale', *ArtBull* 79.4 (1997), pp.708-23, p.708; A McClanan, 'Ritual and Representation of the Byzantine Empress' Court at San Vitale, Ravenna', in N. Cambi & E. Marin (eds.), *Radovi XIII Medunarodnog Kongressa za Starokršćansku Arheologiju II. Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae II: Split-Poreč. 25.9.-I. 10.1994. Vol 2* (Rome & Split, 1998), pp.11-20, pp.14-5.

[16] Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis,* ed. O. Holder-Egger, *MGH Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. VI-IX* (Hannover, 1878); ed. D. M. Deliyannis, CCCM 199 (Turnhout, 2006), trans. D. M. Deliyannis, *Agnellus of Ravenna: The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna*, MTT (Washington D.C., 2004): Agnellus, xxiv, pp.57-9.

[17] T. F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park, PA, 1971), pp.138-47.

part in a liturgical procession.[18] Baker additionally suggested that the imperial programme executed within the church was to reunite the sects of Christianity under Orthodoxy as the dispute over the 'Three Chapters' was having political as well as theological ramifications; and he argued that the panels were not part of a triumph or procession.[19] MacCormack, however, concentrated on the different features of the Theodora panel when compared to Justinian's. She specifically focused on the shell-like niche above Theodora's head which, she argued, indicated that Theodora was already dead when this mosaic was created – according to MacCormack these images were therefore in honour of her and in glory of not only this life, but of the life to come.[20] Yet, Barber argued that Theodora was still very much alive for this depiction; instead, the two panels, both within the iconography and in the positioning of the actual panel indicated the invisible boundary dividing the sexes and allocating them their specific roles; here we can see the mosaics fulfilling the viewers' expectation of the gendered paradigm of the imperial couple.[21]

Andreescu-Treadgold and Treadgold suggested that the mosaic was intended to glorify Justinian and Theodora and, in a wider sense, the institution of imperial autocracy.[22] Yet their main argument was to show that

---

[18] O. G. Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress* (Chicago, IL, 1948), pp.24-7. Von Simson does however make a mistake with the dating of the imperial panels, as he did not realise that Maximian inserted himself into the mosaic after it had been finished, and thus stated that it had to have been created after 548: Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, p.24. McClanan adds to this argument by looking at minor details of the mosaic; the Magi on the bottom of Theodora's *chlamys*, for instance, parallels the act of royal donation: McClanan, 'Ritual and Representation', p.13.

[19] D. Baker, 'Politics, Precedence and Intentions: Aspects of the Imperial Mosaics at San Vitale, Ravenna', in B. Wheeler (ed.), *Representations of the Feminine in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1993), pp.175-216, pp.177, 199-200.

[20] S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, LA, 1981), p.273.

[21] C. Barber, 'Imperial Panels at San Vitale: A Reconsideration', *BMGS* 14 (1990), pp.19-42, pp.38-9.

[22] Andreescu-Treadgold & Treadgold, 'Procopius and the Imperial Panels', p.708. They also argue that these mosaic panels were commemorating the engagement of Theodora's

the mosaics went through two phases of creation. The first phase was when Belisarios had come back to Ravenna after his military exploits in Western Europe and then Persia, with his wife Antonina, thus providing models for these portrait-like figures, and the second phase would have taken place before 548, and was when Maximian, Bishop of Ravenna, had his own image inserted into the mosaic.[23] They argued that Maximian, who had been barred from entering Ravenna by its citizens due to his support for Justinian's Edict of the Three Chapters, would not have incurred the expense and trouble of adding himself to a panel series in which one of the key figures – Theodora – was dead,[24] presumably as the association would not have assisted his career. However, as seen with the consular diptych of Anthemius in 515, the empress did not have to be alive to be included in official imagery of this type.[25] Regardless of whether the empress was alive or not, her image was still important, and it may have been just as likely that Maximian would add himself to the mosaic even after the death of Theodora. Perhaps this was why the imperial figures were not labelled within this mosaic: it was the office of the emperor and the empress that was important for the patron to have represented, the long-lasting figures of piety and authority, and not the individuals themselves. As recently suggested by James, there are in fact other identities of emperors and empresses who could be identified here.[26] That the

grandson to Belisarios and Antonina's daughter. This is dependent on the identification of figures as members of these two families.

[23] Andreescu-Treadgold & Treadgold, 'Procopius and the Imperial Panels', pp.720-1. This can be seen from the irregularities in the mosaic; the left foot of Bishop Maximian is stood on top of foot of the official next to him and is also the only figure who is further forward than the emperor. He is also the only member of this grouping to be named.

[24] Andreescu-Treadgold & Treadgold, 'Procopius and the Imperial Panels', pp.721-2.

[25] As seen in the last chapter, Ariadne's image, or, at least, the representation of the office of the empress, was included on the diptych despite her death three years previous. See 2.2.1: Consular Diptychs for further discussion.

[26] Liz James gave this paper at 'Global Byzantium', the 50th Spring Symposium of Byzantium Studies held at the University of Birmingham in 2017.

imperial couple – and members of their entourage, with the exception of Maximian – are not labelled, therefore feeds into this argument. However, due to the stable dating of construction of the church, it seems fairly realistic to expect the figures to have represented Theodora and Justinian, even if later audiences may not have been able to clearly identify them.

Regardless of the specific dating and identity of these figures, in this mosaic one can see the culmination of the evolution of imperial imagery in the early period of Byzantium. From the almost plain appearance of Helena's image on coins, the next two hundred years show a massive shift in the way that imperial women were represented. There can be no mistaking that the central female figure was an empress, especially when compared to the almost uniformity of the elite women at her side. The elaborate crown, the *pendilia*, the purple and embroidered *chlamys,* and distinct stance at the forefront of the mosaic all suggest the evolution from the *augusta* indistinguishable from noblewomen, to that of a definitive and distinct imperial presence.

3.1.2 Mosaic Positioning

Further significant detail is provided by the half dome of the apse between these two mosaic panels. This dome contains the image of a nimbate Christ, wearing a purple tunic and mantle, bordered with gold and a prominently displayed letter Z, with four other figures.[27] Christ is depicted giving the martyrs' crown to St Vitalis – the saint on Christ's right, for whom the church is named – and receiving the church from its patron, who is on

[27] D. M. Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (New York, NY, 2010), pp.237-8, gives an overview of the decoration found within the apse.

Christ's left. However, if one takes the three large mosaics of the apse as a whole, it could be argued that the placement of Christ above and in-between the imperial couple is akin to the arrangement shown in a marriage ring, albeit on a much larger scale. I would thus argue that there is a double function with this image: the imperial panels were specifically positioned with Christ in between, and above them, to show divine approval for the partnership of Theodora and Justinian, much as was the purpose of the figure of Christ in the marriage coins discussed in the previous chapter. As I will continue to show throughout this chapter, imperial images in the sixth century were represented as an imperial unit; the emperor and empress are shown much more frequently together than apart.

Following on from Barber's argument of division of the sexes and the allocation of gender roles, what has not been fully appreciated in the study of San Vitale is the interaction of the audience with the mosaic panels.[28] Some scholars have suggested that there may have been some gendered segregation in congregational spaces with men on the right, the position of honour, and women on the left – it should be noted that when talking of left and right, particularly in the medieval period, it is referenced according to the subject position of the work itself.[29] By the time the Hagia Sophia was built in Constantinople, several years before San Vitale was built, gendered segregation

[28] I thank Midlands 3 Cities, AHRC, for funding a research trip to Ravenna, as this enabled me to appreciate and focus on the spatial dimensions of San Vitale and consider how the congregation might have interacted with the decorative schema, from their own vantage point. For Barber's argument: Barber, 'Imperial Panels at San Vitale', pp.19-42.
[29] R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (New York, NY, 1965, rev. & repr. R. Krautheimer & S. Ćurčić, 1986), pp.217-8; Schleif, 'Men on the Right, Women on the Left: (A)Symmetrical Spaces and Gendered Places', in V. C. Raguin & S. Stanbury (eds.), *Women's Space: Patronage, Place and Gender in the Medieval Church* (New York, NY, 2006), pp.207-49, p.211. Schlief points out that the modern audience will likely view this in the opposite way, i.e. that when viewing an object, the 'left' would indicate the left of the viewer, not the left of the actual object.

of the congregation was becoming the norm: in his *ekphrasis* on the Hagia Sophia, Paul the Silentary described the upper, 'fair galleries for the women' who could rest 'their laborious elbows' on the stone enclosures between the Thessalian columns.[30] Thus, if early Byzantine churches did segregate based on gender, when looking at the apse of San Vitale, the women would have stood to the left of it, and the men would have stood on the right. This would then suggest that, from their position, the women would have been able to observe the Theodora panel, but not the Justinian panel, and the men would have been able to see the Justinian panel, but not the Theodora panel (fig.1.43).

I argue that this may have been laid out in such a way so as to place the empress and emperor into appropriate positions along gendered lines, despite their placement within the sanctuary where the laity was not allowed to enter. These panels then were in a liminal space, between the forbidden and sacred space of the sanctuary, and in view of their gender-appropriate audience. In these positions these panels might also have acted as 'gender labels',[31] indicating where the correct place for the laity to stand was, or perhaps as role models, apparent paragons of piety for the congregation based on gender lines. These panels would also have acted as a reminder to both the laity and the clergy of their status as their rulers and the prosperity and military might of the empire to which they belonged, and of their positions as the representatives of

[30] Paul the Silentiary, *Descriptio Sanctae Sophiae Descriptio Ambonis*, ed. P. Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius: Kuntsbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit,* Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Commentare 8 (Leipzig & Berlin, 1912), trans. C. Mango (ed.), *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), pp.80-91, 91-96: Paul Sil., 362-398. A further example is Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna: the placement of the processions of martyrs and of the virgins also play into this gendered convention.

[31] Schleif, 'Men on the Right', p.220. That it was the image of the emperor and the empress, as their rulers, may have demanded that people followed this convention.

Christ on earth.[32] If it was the case that these panels had been laid out in a way that accounted for gendered separation, that there may have been a chancel screen also needs to be taken into account. However, the mosaics are at such a height that they may have still been viewed from the congregational space, if indeed there were any chancel screens.

3.2 Carved Representations: Ivory and Epigraphy

Although not as famous or eye-catching as the mosaics in Ravenna, this thesis will also consider the carved representations of Theodora, which took a variety of forms. This will include the examination of the a consular diptych, which had a small and likely limited audiences and contemporary epigraphy, particularly monograms, which would have had much larger, public audiences.

3.2.1 Consular Diptychs

Justin, a close relative of Justinian, was named consul in 540 and, as was convention – although this was drawing to a close – he was portrayed in his role as consul on an ivory diptych, overseeing the distribution of largess which was taking part in the lower register (fig.1.44).[33] As with several previous consular diptychs, the upper register of the diptych contained three roundels; due to the specific dating of this items, the representation of the emperor and the empress, shown with the specific imperial regalia that had clearly been codified by this time, must be Justinian and Theodora. The roundel in the

[32] This theme will be explored more throughout this case study; see Maguire, 'The Cycle of Images', pp.121-51.
[33] J. C. Anderson, cat.51, in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, pp.51-4. This object can now be found in Staatliche Museen, Berlin, inv. 6367.

middle contained the bust of Christ. Although the hierarchical positioning – with the emperor on the right of Christ and thus in the position of honour, with Theodora taking up the secondary position – can be seen to fit into conventional norms, the roundels are all on the same level. In previous diptychs, the middle and thus highest position was usually elevated above the other two, in the instances where three roundels were part of the upper register. This could suggest that the two spheres – political and religious – were becoming more closely interlinked than in previous years.

Additionally, it also suggests that the office of the empress was drawing more in line with that of the emperor; although still in the secondary position, she was not situated below the emperor, or any other figure, to indicate her being at a lower level in the hierarchal chain. James discussed this unusual positioning by examining some of the comparative materials, and concluded that such a close link between the empress and Christ was rare in this period and that divine authority was generally depicted as 'descending to the emperor alone': in this instance, however, the upper register clearly showed that the empress was a ruler, a 'dignitary under God', chosen just as the emperor was.[34] Furthermore, she, along with previous scholars, asserted that this example would be one of the first instances where the actual figure of Christ appeared in a context alongside the imperial couple.[35] However, I would argue that this is untrue and is not reflected in the historical record: the marriage coins of Pulcheria and Marcian (fig.1.28), and of Ariadne and Anastasios (fig.1.26) – as discussed in the previous case study – both depicted the image of Christ

[34] James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.135-6.
[35] A. Grabar, '*L'Iconoclasme byzantin: Le dossier archéologique* (Paris, 1957), considered it to be the earliest representation; James suggested that the only exception to this was Barberini Ivory: James, *Empresses and Power*, p.135, note 5.

blessing their union, standing between the two imperial figures.[36] Thus, almost a century earlier than argued by James, the material record indicated portrayals of Christ interacting with the empress, and the imperial couple, by blessing them and showcasing divine approval for their rule. James' conclusion also ignored the coin types of fifth-century empresses – Aelia Eudoxia, Aelia Pulcheria (fig.1.15), Aelia Eudokia, and Verina – that depicted the *manus dei* as crowning the empress: another indication of divine approval of the empress' reign, regardless of whether the figure of Christ was depicted. What could be said instead is that this consular diptych – alongside the apse mosaics in San Vitale – is the first that showed Christ blessing the rule of the imperial couple and their joint partnership, that had not been commissioned by the imperial couple themselves. Instead, they were patronised by a member of their broader, elite circle: the consul Justin and Julianus Argentarius respectively. Clearly then, this distinct iconographic type of portrayal was being expressed by wealthy members of the public, looking to honour the emperor and empress, and was being transmitted into the cultural memory, as well as being performed by the imperial couple themselves.

Theodora holds the distinction of being the last empress to be represented on a consular diptych. After this instance, the emperor was the only one allowed to hold the position of consul, and thus, with no competitive element as encouragement or gifts between consuls, elites, and imperials, the consular diptych as a medium died out.

[36] *RIC X*, cat.502 (Marcian) for Pulcheria and Marcian in 450, and *DOC I*, cat.2, for Ariadne and Anastasios in 491.

3.2.2 Monograms

Justinian is particularly famed for his construction of Hagia Sophia. Indeed, in later years, his image was used in both a donor mosaic above the Beautiful Door inside Hagia Sophia, which also featured Constantine as offering the city of Constantinople to the enthroned Virgin Mary and Child, and on the seals of the priests and *ekklesiekdikoi* of Hagia Sophia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[37] Unfortunately, it would seem that, by this point in time at least, Theodora had been left out of the equation.[38] However, this was not the case contemporarily, if carved indications of her patronage are included within the historical record and examined to assess her public activities.[39]

Justinian and Theodora's joint patronage of Hagia Sophia was clearly emphasised through their monograms, intricately intertwined within a foliage pattern of acanthus and palm tree leaves, on the capitals of the columns that

[37] A particularly clear example is in the Dumbarton Oaks Seals Collection, inv. BZS.1958.106.4810, wherein Justinian I offers a miniature Hagia Sophia to the Virgin Mary and Child. It is, in fact, very similar to the donor mosaic. The *ekklesiekdikoi* formed a judiciary tribunal centred at the church.

[38] James notes that 'bad' empresses could be omitted from the sources: James, *Empresses and Power*, p.19. This pattern of omission of the empress also included their undertaking of patronage which, although does not start or end with Theodora, is particularly prevalent within her tenure, especially if using only the works of Prokopios: Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', pp.99-100. McClanan starts to reclaim Theodora's works by examining the literary sources, but neglects to analyse any physical evidence: McClanan, *Representations*, pp.93-106. This kind of 'redaction' by contemporary authors likely also affected the representation of Martina, our empress in the seventh century, and the purported lack of her patronage activities. See Ferber for discussion on Theophanes' treatment of Herakleios' reign (and thus Martina) as a tale of two halves, predicated on Herakleios' acceptance of the Monothelite heresy and the negative consequences he therefore faces in his later years: J. Ferber, 'Theophanes' Account of the Reign of Heraclius', in E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys & A. Moffatt (eds.), *Byzantine Papers: Proceedings of the First Australian Byzantine Studies Conference, Canberra, 17-19 May, 1978* (Canberra, 1981; repr. Leiden, 2017), pp.32-42.

[39] Most contemporary authors only mention Justinian's name when discussing the patronage of Hagia Sophia: Paul Sil., 550; Prokopios of Caesarea, Περὶ Κτισμάτων, ed. J. Haury, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia,* 3 vols (Leipzig, 1905-13), trans. H. B. Dewing, *The Buildings, Volume 7,* Loeb 343 (Cambridge, MA, 1940): *Buildings*, I.i, 23. However, both of these men were working under Justinian; perhaps they only mentioned Justinian to emphasise his role in its construction.

are still extant in Hagia Sophia today (fig.1.56).[40] Thus by stamping their mark on visible spaces within the church, Theodora and Justinian were displayed as patrons, emphasising their piety, wealth and ability to create a structure like Hagia Sophia: a shorthand as a boost to their prestige and to underline their power. These monograms – 'of Theodora' and occasionally 'of the *augusta*', as well as 'of Justinian' –[41] make an appearance on the capitals of columns within other ecclesiastical contexts as well. The Church of Ss. Sergios and Bakchos was likely commissioned by the couple before the construction of Hagia Sophia, and displays the monograms of the imperial couple on several of their columns, as well as a large epigram inscribed around the architrave of the church, which will be discussed in the next section.[42] The ten columns in the nave of Hagia Eirene, which was rebuilt after the fires of the Nika Riots in 532, featured the monograms of Theodora, Justinian, equally numbered, and their titles, again indicating the imperial couple's collective patronage of another church within Constantinople.[43] A column excavated within the hinterlands of Constantinople,

[40] Additionally, monograms also appear on the plates of the bronze rings around the sixteen columns in the naos of Hagia Sophia; of these, there are an equal number of Justinian and Theodora: Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', p.106. See this article also for excellent analysis of the *kontakion* of Romanos the Melode, who, in response to the Nika Riots presents the imperial couple as the saviours of the city through their prayer and their patronage: Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', pp.106-8.
[41] Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', p.106.
[42] The date of construction is up for debate. Traditionally it was dated to 527, but Mango argued for the early 530s, making it contemporary to Hagia Sophia: C. Mango, 'The Church of Saint Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople and the Alleged Tradition of Octagonal Palatine Churches', *JÖB* 21 (1972), pp.189-93. However, Croke has argued for the early 320s, and also claims Justinian was the sole patron: B. Croke, "Justinian, Theodora, and the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus', *DOP* 60 (2006), pp.25-63. See J. Bardill, 'The Date, Dedication, and Design of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople', *JLA* 10.1 (2017), pp.62-103, for arguments for a later date of c.532-6, and thus built after Hagia Sophia. As recently as 2020, work has been published that only mentioned Justinian as patron: C. Arikan, C. & A. Rhoby, 'The Church of Saints Sergios and Bakchos', prepared by I. Toth & A. Rhoby, *Materials for the Study of Late Antique and Medieval Greek and Latin Inscriptions in Istanbul: A Revised and Expanded Booklet* (Oxford & Vienna, 2020), pp.23-8, p.23.
[43] A. Felle, 'Hagia Eirene in Constantinople', prepared by I. Toth & A. Rhoby, *Materials for the Study of Late Antique and Medieval Greek and Latin Inscriptions in Istanbul: A Revised and Expanded Booklet* (Oxford & Vienna, 2020), pp.29-38, p.33; schema first recorded in W.

in the suburb of Hebdomon (present day Bakirköy), also displays the monograms of Theodora and Justinian, showcasing the couple's building programme there, but more specifically an indication of their rebuilding of the Church of St John Prodromos (fig.1.54).[44] The monograms of both personal names and titles are in the genitive, indicating possession, and, by extension, indicating the role of patron that both Theodora and Justinian played in the construction and dedication of these buildings.[45]

Outside of the capital, the couple's monograms are seen less frequently, and certainly not in such a concentrated area, but they are used in ecclesiastical spaces. There are two extant examples: monogrammed capitals on the colonnades of the Church of St John near Ephesos, and a capital in Germia (present day Gümüşkonak), which probably came from the Church of the Archangel Michael.[46] Malalas notes that Theodora founded two churches – that of the Archangel Michael and the basilica of Anatolios – in his hometown of Antioch; Unterweger points out that the columns were sent from Constantinople, and therefore would likely have had the imperial monograms carved onto them too.[47] Just like in Constantinople, these monograms

---

S. George, *The Church of Saint Eirene at Constantinople* (London, 1912), p.21, fig.7. There are three monograms which give the name of Theodora and three that give the name of Justinian. Other than alternating as you walk towards the apse, ending with βασιλέως on the final columns, there does not seem to be a particular pattern to their positioning.

[44] This column is currently in the Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, inv.1239 T; the monogram of Justinian is also inscribed on it. There is another column in the collection which has a fifth/sixth-century empress on the capital, excavated from the Hebdomon too, though likely not from the Church of St John Prodromos, inv.6229 T (fig.1.55). The Hebdomon, a suburb seven miles from the Milion, was the site of an imperial palace and military camp, and played an important role in imperial ceremony (particularly triumphal processions and accessions) from the late fourth century. It was improved upon and rebuilt in the sixth century: Van Milligen, *Byzantine Constantinople*, pp.316-41, particularly p.335 for Justinian's (and Theodora's, though she is not mentioned) improvements. This again highlights the empress' image within imperial, military, and victorious contexts.

[45] Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, p.168.

[46] Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', p.101.

[47] Malalas, 17.19; Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', pp.101-2.

highlighted the patronage of churches by the imperial couple for their contemporary audiences, and all of the associative benefits that came with this, and give their present day audience at least partial evidence for their patronage patterns, dotted across the empire.

3.2.3 Epigraphy

The evidence provided by the monograms is compounded by longer sections of epigraphy scattered around the empire; these longer sections give opportunity to examine how the imperial couple was presenting themselves and, in turn, how their citizens thought it appropriate to describe them. It has been noted that there was a large amount of epigraphic activity within newly reconquered areas, particularly North Africa.[48] No doubt, these areas benefitted from greater patronage of the emperor and empress due to a period of consolidation after conquest.

A substantial amount of the epigraphy that was inscribed in these regions was done so on walls; the defensive walls on ten settlements bore epigrams that named the imperial couple.[49] There are also still extant epigrams on defensive structures at the eastern border in Bostra and on the citadel's gate in Kyrrhos, both now in Syria.[50] Due to the placement on walls and other structures associated with defence, erected or improved by their own officials, Theodora and Justinian were clearly being associated with protection: the

[48] Unterweger helpfully arranges these different types of evidence of patronage on a map; present day Tunisia holds a lot of extant epigraphy: Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', p.100.
[49] The names of Justinian, Theodora, and the prefect Solomon, who set up the walls between 539 and 544, were recorded: Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', p.100; recorded in J. Durliat, *Les dedicaces d'ouvrages de défense dans l'Afrique byzantine* (Rome, 1981).
[50] Kyrrhos gives the names of Justinian, Theodora, Belisarios and the *domestikos* Eustathios. See McClanan, *Representations*, p.94; Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', p.100.

security of the empire, as we saw earlier with the coins of Helena, was in their hands. Angelova points out additional inscriptions at Miletus in Turkey and the ramparts at Heliopolis, which she suggests can be taken as the citizens' consideration of their protection being dependent on the imperial couple, and linking the empress to the concept of victory through her inclusion in the inscription.[51]

As well as the monograms discussed earlier, the Church of St John at Ephesos had an epigram inscribed on the wall that supplemented the, now lost, mosaic of an image of Christ crowning the emperor and empress.[52] Not only did the inscription specify Theodora and Justinian's involvement in the construction of the church, but they were represented pictorially as receiving Christ's blessing within the church itself: a clear expression of their piety and the divine favour of their rule, together, which was repeated and emphasised by the inscription. The patronage of ecclesiastical structures was also recorded in the inscription within St Catherine's, on Mount Sinai. The inscription reads as follows: 'This was created on behalf of the memory and repose of our empress Theodora'.[53] Thus, what is particularly significant for the inscription in St Catherine's is that, by the time of its completion, Theodora would have been dead, and its intent was to commemorate her name.[54] Therefore, Justinian, or

---

[51] Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, p.201. The inscriptions are recorded in D. Feissel, 'Les édifices de Justinien au témoignage de Procope et de l'épigraphie', *Antiquité Tardive* 8 (2000), pp.1-104, no.38 & 47, respectively. Angelova also points out that this type of inscription 'gained popularity', citing an inscription of Justin II and Sophia on a town wall in North Africa that identified them as 'our most Christian and utterly invincible emperors': *ILCV* 1.27.

[52] Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', p.101. For further detail, see C. Foss, *Ephesus After Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1979), pp.88-9.

[53] 'Υπέρ μνήμης κ[αί] άνα-παύσεως τής γενα-μένης ήμών βασιλίδος Θεοδώρας': I. Ševčenko, 'The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery in the Light of Its Inscriptions', *DOP* 20 (1966), pp.255-64, p.256, no.4.

[54] G. H. Forsyth, 'The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Church and Fortress of Justinian', *DOP* 22 (1968), pp.1-19, p.9.

the officials responsible for carrying out this task, must have found it appropriate to include her name still; this again suggests the necessity of having the empress represented with imperial portrayals, but also the appropriateness of including their names within ecclesiastical settings.

Finally, looking back at the capital city, there is an example of epigraphy set up by Justinian and Theodora present in Constantinople too. The inscription in St Sergios and Bakchos is still extant, though the structure is now a mosque, Küçük Ayasofya Camii or the Little Hagia Sophia Mosque, and runs along the architrave of the whole upper echelon. The laity and the clergy would have been able to see sections of the twelve hexameters, regardless of their position, and it has also been noted that it would have been painted; a bright blue background is evidenced while the text itself was probably coloured to ensure visibility from the ground.[55] The epigram celebrates the achievements of Justinian in the building of the church and honours the saint, before asking that the 'power (ΚΡΑΤΟϹ) of the God-crowned Theodora (ΘΕΟϹΤΕΦΕΟϹ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΗϹ)' be increased.[56] It has been argued that, based on Theodora's reputation and mention within the source material, that this church was founded by Theodora for the Monophysite community that lived in Constantinople, some of whom she was sheltering in the nearby Hormisdas Palace.[57] Justinian was 'known' to be opposed to the Monophysites; see Foss for his argument that, though the imperial couple pretended to be divided on key

[55] Bardill, 'The Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus', pp.2, 4; Arikan & Rhoby, 'Church of Saints Sergios and Bakchos', p.23.
[56] The epigram was initially translated in C. Mango, 'Church of Saint Sergius and Bacchus', p.190, but has been amended since: Bardill, 'Date, Dedication, and Design', p.87.
[57] Much has been written on Theodora's Monophysite tendencies, and the Monophysite sources, such as John of Ephesus, are largely favourable to her: see Foss, 'The Empress Theodora', pp.143-8, where he claims that most of her philanthropy or patronage benefitted the Monophysite East or Constantinople.

issues like religious controversies, they used a divide and conquer approach to keep both sides appeased – hence Theodora's support of the Monophysites.[58] Whether or not this was the intent behind this particular activity, we can yet again see the imperial couple linking themselves with ecclesiastical space, associated with a holy figure – St Sergius – and underlining the success and longevity of their rule.

While the evidence is not always displayed epigraphically, there is evidence within the historical record that Theodora had at least five cities named (or renamed) after her, three fortresses, one province and a diocese in Thrace.[59] Thus, alongside the cities that bore her name, the monograms that stamped her presence within ecclesiastic spaces and the epigraphy that associated her with mundane and profane spaces, these examples highlight how visible the sixth-century empress was, and indicates a clear pattern of patronage that spread across the empire, concentrated in key areas: the imperial city and areas of military development.

---

[58] Foss, 'The Empress Theodora', pp.158-9, 171-5. Prokopios obviously reports this type of ruling style negatively throughout, but Foss argues that Justinian could not risk offending either the 'orthodox' elements of his empire or the newly reconquered parts, which were largely Monophysite: Theodora was key within Justinian's reign as an 'agent of a consistent policy' that strengthened his rule. This included her hand in the murder of Amalsuntha (thus giving just cause to invade the Italian peninsula) and the intrigues that kept both John of Cappadocia and Belisarios from growing too powerful.

[59] Cities: Theodorias (Vaga; *Buildings*, VI.5.12-14); a floor mosaic in Qasr Libya indicates the refounding of the city in honour of the empress (ΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΙΑΣ); the fortress Anasarthon upgraded to the town of Theodorias (Syria; Malalas, 18.31); Theodoropolis (Thrace, *Buildings* IV.7.5); Theodoropolis, new city on the Danube (*Buildings*, IV.6.15-18). Fortresses: two named Theodoropolis and one called Pulchra Theodora (*Buildings*, IV.11). Areas: Theodorias, province near Antioch (Malalas, 18.39); Theodoroupolis, diocese in Thrace. For further detail on the cities and areas named after Theodora, see Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', p.101. Angelova goes into some detail about the toponymical practices for empresses – there is long history of this sort of practice: Angelova, *Sacred Founder*, pp.143-4, 201.

3.3 Literary Evidence: Patronage and *Ekphrasis*

Textual evidence for Theodora is often difficult to use with any degree of certainty.[60] Yet, there are some mentions of her patronage activities within the literary sources. Though Prokopios tends to downplay Theodora's public works, he does note some undertakings in Constantinople: the two hospices of Isidoros and Arkadios (next to Hagia Eirene), a short-stay hospice for visitors to the city, and a convent for repentant prostitutes.[61] In the work of John the Lydian, there is a section heading on Theodora's work for 'public welfare'; unfortunately that section is no longer extant, but it is telling that Theodora was so famed for good works that John wrote an entire section dedicated to it.[62] Thus, in the literary material, therefore, she can be portrayed as acting within the model of the 'good' empress; supporting the poor and needy through philanthropic and pious actions.[63]

There is arguably some evidence that Theodora sponsored the construction of the portico next to the Arkadianai baths in Constantinople, due to the placement of her statue. This, Angelova suggests, was a carefully considered move; porticoes were large visible structures within the cityscape, built for public use and enjoyment, and thus was a significant gesture to

---

[60] Showcased by the number of articles which have been written on the subject: Fisher, 'Theodora and Antonina', pp.253-79; Foss, 'The Empress Theodora', pp.141-76; Brubaker, 'Sex, Lies and Textuality', pp.83-101, are some good examples of the care that must be taken when reading the source material for Theodora.

[61] *Buildings* I.2.17; I.11.27; I.9.5-10 respectively. See McClanan, *Representations*, pp.93-106, for further discussion. Unterweger notes that there are over thirty churches restored by the emperor in Constantinople – Theodora's role there is massively reduced: Unterweger, 'Image of Empress Theodora', pp.103-4.

[62] John the Lydian, Περὶ ἀρχῶν τῆς Ῥωμαίων πολιτείας, ed. & trans. A. C. Bandy, *Ioannes Lydus: On Powers, or, The Magistracies of the Roman State*, Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 149 (Philadelphia, 1983): John Lyd. Prooemium iii.15; Foss, 'The Empress Theodora', p.149.

[63] John Malalas also relates the story of Theodora purchasing prostitutes from brothel-keeps to free them, and giving a charitable donation to them afterwards: Malalas, 18.24.

enhance imperial reputation through female civic patronage.[64] Theodora also lent her name to and may have been associated with public baths: Angelova makes the interesting point that the endorsement of public baths was linked to ideas of public benefaction but also of beauty, which is why it was a popular activity for imperial women to undertake.[65]

While we can be confident that the name and public activities of Theodora were visible within Constantinopolitan contexts, and beyond, there are also several instances where images of Theodora have been recorded as existing in Constantinople. Yet they either did not survive to this day or are not clearly attributed to her and therefore cannot be positively identified as such, as has been discussed in previous chapters. However, there are contemporary texts which discussed these images, some in great detail. Paul the Silentiary, for instance, was the author of a detailed *ekphrasis* of the Hagia Sophia. Within this text, representations of Justinian and Theodora were mentioned at least twice. Related to the discussion of monograms above, Paul described the middle of the silver chancel screen which had a monogram of Justinian and Theodora on it that, Paul added, was carved so that it had a sign of the cross in the centre.[66] Though he briefly described the capitals of the columns, which, as discussed above, survive with the monogram inscribed on them, he made no

---

[64] Angelova, *Sacred Founders,* pp.162-6. Though normally associated with emperors' fora, porticoes were occasionally constructed by empresses: of the Late Antique empresses, Galla Placidia's portico in Ostia is one. Though Justinian is described as the patron by Prokopios, Angelova argues that the setting up of the statue of Theodora within it 'by the city in gratitude' would suggest otherwise: *Buildings*, I.2.1-9; Angelova, *Sacred Founders,* p.166. This statue will be discussed later in this section.

[65] Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, pp.173-7. Baths: Theodorianae (Carthage; *Buildings,* VI.5.10), and Angelova argues an association between Theodora's potential portico, statue and the Arkadianai baths.

[66] Paul Sil., 682-720. Mango added that it is not entirely clear whether the monogram was formed in the shape of a cross, or if the cross was just part of the schematic decoration of this part of the parapet: Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire,* p.88, note 157.

mention of those particular monograms. However, special emphasis was given to the monogram on the chancel screen. It is significant that Paul chose to mention that the priests had to enter through the three doors beneath the screen, and thus the monogram, to get into the sanctuary. The imperial monogram, what we might consider as something akin to modern concepts of a 'brand', or signifier of their joint rule, was therefore always present at the beginning and the end of any service – on the ceremonial entry and exit of the priests in the sanctuary – clearly linking the imperial couple to the religious sphere, even as a part of the ecclesiastical service, reminding the laity and clergy of their generosity, piety, and great achievement in patronising this church.

Paul also described the altar cloth of the Hagia Sophia, which was made of a variety of costly materials, including purple silk, gold leaf, and silver thread, and held a myriad of images and decorative schema, which included Christ with Peter and Paul enclosed within a golden, triple arcade, Christ's miracles, and portraits of Justinian and Theodora.[67] As well as being present in the sanctuary of the church, their images were also joined together by the Virgin Mary in one instance, and by Christ in another – it may be assumed that these would have been similar in stance and iconography to that of the marriage coins of the fifth century, or perhaps the Soros apse at Blachernai.[68] Hence, the sanctuary of the Hagia Sophia was filled with images of this imperial unit and associated with a plethora of holy figures, some of whom were actively blessing their partnership. Around the edges of the cloth were depictions of the

[67] Paul Sil., 755-806. Angelova has these as 'curtains' instead of an altar cloth; the translation seems clear about this section being about an altar cloth: Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, p.168.
[68] See Mango, 'Theotokopolis', pp.19-20, for discussion on the Soros.

emperors' good deeds and patronage of charitable institutions in the city; Mango added that this description is similar to the remnants of the Daniel and St Peter Egyptian textiles, now held in a collection in Berlin.[69] However, it must be remembered that the sanctuary was not accessible to the laity, and thus it was only the clergy that would have been able to view it, especially in any detail. That the altar cloth was a luxurious piece as well as an innovation worthy of praise can be inferred from the amount of time Paul spent describing it; he also specifically pointed out that he wished to describe the cloth because others would not be able to see it, underlining his superior knowledge of the church and also the importance of the piece.[70]

A further example of this is the mosaic in the dome of the Chalke Gate. The Chalke Gate was one of the entrances to the complex of the Great Palace, and from descriptions, can be seen to be a substantial structure. Unfortunately, like most of the complex, this edifice does not survive. The Chalke Gate was rebuilt at least twice in the early years of Byzantine Constantinople: Anastasios had to rebuild it during his reign, due to the riots and subsequent fires that occurred, and, after the fires of the Nika Riot in 532, it had to be rebuilt again by Justinian.[71] Some time after the reign of Justinian, the Chalke became a place of detention, with mentions of its use as such from the seventh century under Herakleios, up until the twelfth century.[72] During the sixth century, however, Prokopios described a magnificent mosaic being commissioned for the dome of the Chalke, which depicted the figures of Justinian and Theodora, who were situated above, first, an adulatory Senate and then a layer of defeated

[69] Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p.89, note 165.
[70] Paul Sil., 755.
[71] Mango, *Brazen House*, pp.27-30.
[72] Mango, *Brazen House*, p.34.

enemies.[73] Prokopios also added that they received 'godlike honours', though it is not certain what that means. This could merely mean the praise from their captives and the Senate, but it is also likely that it refers to them being depicted as nimbate, as can be seen in the mosaics at Ravenna. As in this mosaic, the audience was once again reminded of the partnership that existed between the two imperial figures. This was underlined by the members of the Senate and the defeated enemies being portrayed below them: the political and social hierarchy was thus reinforced through an actual visual hierarchy. Moreover, this further highlights the continuing tradition of the image of the empress as being associated with imperial triumph; she is literally shown, victorious, above the conquered enemies.

3.3.1 Statuary

As well as describing the mosaics of the victorious emperor and empress in the Chalke Gate, Prokopios also related that there was a statue of Theodora in Constantinople, on top of a purple – one can assume porphyry – column.[74] Nothing else was record about the physical state of the statue, save that as beautiful as this statue was, no work by human hands could ever do justice to the loveliness of Theodora. This statue was placed in the Arkadianai, 'an ornament to Constantinople', within the newly-built portico,[75] which was situated on the south-east section of the city. In Prokopios' description, it was made clear that the ships passing by were able to sail up to the edges of this court, even conversing with the many people who were walking through it, and

[73] *Buildings*, I.x, 12-15.
[74] *Buildings*, I.xi, 2-8.
[75] *Buildings*, I.xi, 1. The patron of this portico was discussed earlier in this section.

it was a place of 'surpassing beauty… adorned with great numbers of statues, some of bronze, some of polished stone'.[76] That an image of Theodora was put in this court, one so embellished by either her husband or herself (or collectively), may again suggest that statues of *augustae* were being put into places filled with imperial associations. Especially as the statue was dedicated by the city, in gratitude to her, and alongside visible and grand buildings of civic use – the public baths, the portico – we see the image of Theodora work to enhance the reputation of the office of the empress, and by extension that of the imperial couple as a unit, in civic contexts.[77]

As with the previous empresses in this thesis, Theodora was mentioned in the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*. Also as with the other empresses, these mentions have to be interpreted with caution. There was a possible statue group, one figure of which may have represented Theodora, possibly facing the Baths of Zeuxippus, but which has been argued to actually represent Justin II and Sophia.[78] Whether the statue was meant, by the original commissioner, to represent Theodora or not, the perception that it was Theodora who was represented, and thus appropriate for her to appear there, is certainly significant. These areas would have been busy public spaces, especially outside of the Baths: Theodora was thus considered to be a part of the city's landscape long after her death, by at least two hundred years. In this, the representation of Theodora is reminiscent of Helena, though certainly she is less prominent than Helena, and appears in less symbolically significant locations.

[76] *Buildings*, I.xi, 6-7.
[77] Angelova, *Sacred Founders,* p.166.
[78] *Parastaseis,* ch.81. For chapter commentary and potential mix-up, see Cameron & Herrin, *Parastaseis,* p.272.

3.4 Numismatic Evidence

There is a significant peculiarity about the representational materials of Theodora: despite her presence in recorded physical imagery, she does not appear to be represented on any coinage, which is usually one of the more reliable – at least in terms of identification – and numerous medium for images of Late Antique and early Byzantine empresses. This has become a point of discussion within gender and art historical discussions about this period;[79] why is it that Theodora, who comes down to us as such an important figure in Justinian's reign, was not promoted as such on his coinage?

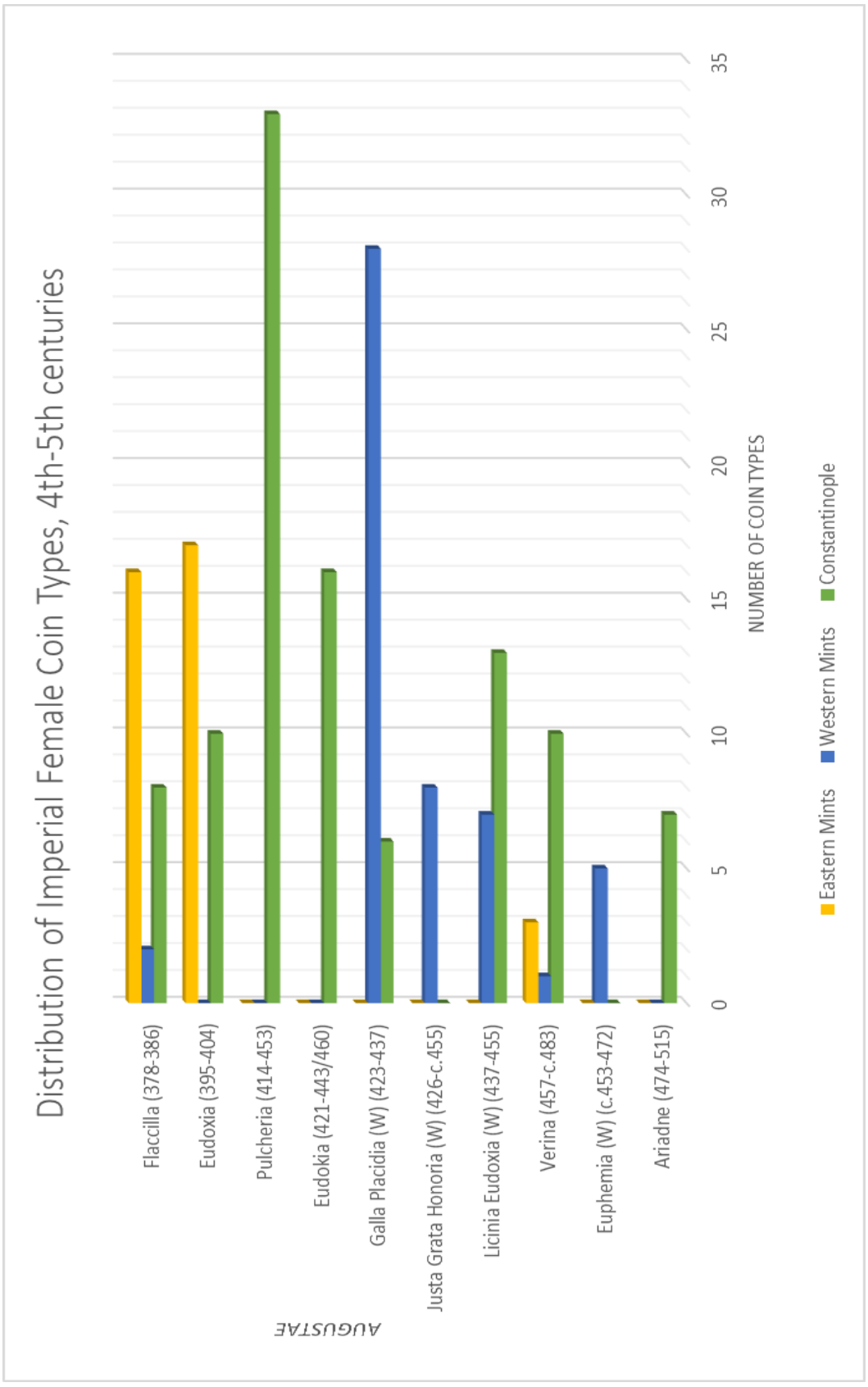
3.4.1 Previous Coinage

To address this question, we must remind ourselves of why empresses were placed on coins at all. As Elkins and Brilliant convincingly argued, ancient coinage was an early type of 'communicative medium' from the central authority; the purpose of the numismatic image was to convey a particular message with widespread dissemination and, as such, was often overloaded with an 'immense, proclamatory iconography'.[80] As the last two case studies have shown, the personifications that were associated with the *augustae* held, by and large, connotations with fertility, peace, security, and victory, and included the relatively recent introduction of Christian iconography. Clearly

[79] For examples on the discussion, see Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', pp.582-3; McClanan, *Representations*, pp.144-6. Some bypass the issue entirely: James, *Empresses and Power,* p.109; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, pp.50-1; Foss, 'The Empress Theodora', p.151, but there is a clear gap in numismatic continuity between the tenures of Ariadne and Sophia which should be addressed.
[80] Elkins, 'Coins, Contexts and an Iconographic Approach', p.41; and R. Brilliant, 'Forwards and Backwards in the Historiography of Roman Art', *JRA* 20 (2007), pp.7-24, p.8.

then the empress held an important role on coinage through the association of herself and her office as an *augusta* with these key attributes, being showcased as such throughout the empire. We must also contextualise the production of these coins, of all denominations, taking into account the actual geographical spread and number of different types produced over the course of the past century and a half, to identify any trends:

Table.4. Distribution of Numismatic Types of all Denominations, 383-491.[81]



The pattern displayed in this table can suggest several points: first of all, there appears to be a general trend; with one exception towards the end of the fifth century, there was a decrease in the number of coin types with empresses minted on them. Furthermore, after the split of the empire in 395 between Arkadios and Honorius, the geographical spread largely seemed to shrink to the political centres: peripheral mints tended not to produce them, though the same cannot be said for coins bearing the image of the emperor.[82]

However, there is a clear anomaly towards the end of the fifth century: Verina's coin-type output and spread increased dramatically, as well as including a unique type which displayed both the Western Roman empress, Marcia Euphemia, and Verina, as the Eastern Roman empress, on the reverse.[83] I would argue that the production and message of this coin was unique during the Late Antique period due to the positive interplay between the centres of Western and Eastern Roman rule.[84] In no other instance do we find the empresses of the two capitals on the same type previously, or, other than commemorative marriage coins, even appearing with another figure that was

---

[81] All data collected was compiled from *RIC IX-X*. Western mints: Rome, Ravenna, Aquileia, Siskia. Eastern mints: Thessalonika, Heraklea, Cyzikos, Alexandria, Nikomedia, Antioch. There are two base metal types of Verina for which the mints cannot be identified: *RIC X,* cat.717-8 (Leo I, East).

[82] For example, even though Marcian ruled only for seven years, his coins were minted in a much wider array over the empire, from Rome and Ravenna in the West, to Antioch and Nikomedia in the East. An early exception here is Aelia Eudoxia, the wife and sister-in-law of Arkadios and Honorius respectively, who was represented on coins produced in both eastern and western mints: this was likely due to continued positive relations between the two halves belonging to the brothers, at least initially.

[83] *RIC X,* cat.2805 (Anthemius). This coin was minted in Rome under the aegis of Anthemius (467-472), Marcia Euphemia's husband. Marcia Euphemia was the daughter of Marcian (450-57) and the step-daughter of Pulcheria, who had married Anthemius in 453. This marital connection between the centres of the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, as well as a subsequent marriage between Marcian, their son, and Leontia, Verina and Leo's youngest daughter, signposted positive relations between the two capitals, which was not always the case.

[84] This small period also sees the acknowledgement of consuls and sole consulships for both Anthemius and Leo – a clear sign of reciprocal approval.

not a personification or goddess. Though the political relationship may have been a positive one, I would also argue that the amount of coins produced with the image of Verina was, in part, down to a 'rival' imperial female figure also being produced on the coins of the Western Roman Empire. This may be especially true in the overlap years of the tenures of Verina and Licinia Eudoxia – Licinia had her coins minted in Constantinople, and so we also find coins of Verina minted in the West. When there was no ruling empress in the West (after Euphemia in 472), there was not as much need for there to be coins produced in the East that had the image of the Byzantine empress on them. What could be inferred from this then is that coins were a useful medium in terms of political competition, but also of political association.

3.4.2 Lack of Numismatic 'Competition'?

During the reign of Theodora and Justinian, there were no emperors in the West – or empresses, for that matter – minting coins with female figures on them, thus there was no need to have Theodora appear on them, acting competitively or otherwise. The slight problem here is that of Amalasuntha. However, her role was somewhat different in that she was the regent for her son and did not mint any coins in her own name; rather coins bore the monogram of Athalaric.[85] Arguably any competition was likely to have focused on elites within the capital city, such as Anicia Juliana, who was one of the last members of the old ruling family from the Western Roman Empire, and was both affluent and a prolific patron.[86] This could potentially be supported by the

[85] See Chapter Two: Ariadne (2.3), for discussion on Amalasuntha's potential appearance, with Athalaric on a consular diptych.
[86] See Appendix 1.3b. G. S. Nathan, 'The *Vienna Dioscorides' Dedicatio* to Anicia Juliana: A Usurpation of Imperial Patronage?', in G. S. Nathan & L. Garland (eds.), Basileia*: Essays on*

dedicatory inscription in the Church of Ss Sergios and Bakkhos, which bore similarities in phrase to those found in the earlier inscriptions of St Polyeuktos: for example, the later inscription described Theodora as having 'a mind adorned with piety', whilst Anicia Juliana had a 'mind filled with piety'.[87] Thus, it may have seemed more important to have the image of Justinian, in his military garb as the 'active soldier' that he was attempting to portray himself as, minted both in the centre and in the peripheries.[88] This is also consistent with his expansionist policies and reconquests: Justinian had mints set up in the re-conquered areas, in both North Africa – Carthage and Numidia – and in Italy after its reconquest. In Constantinople, if Anicia Juliana and her cohort were seen as competition, then Theodora and Justinian's joint ventures in the patronage of basilicas, charitable institutions, and the placement of their monograms, inscriptions, and images in key locations, would have gone far in gaining them the cultural capital needed to contend.

As Brubaker and Tobler have argued, the Theodosian imperial family minted coins to associate themselves with the Constantinian family, seen

---

Imperium *and Culture, in Honour of E. M. and M. J. Jeffreys* (Brisbane, 2011), pp.95-102, pp.97-8, particularly note 20, for further discussion on her status, activities, and their competition. Her patronage included the Church of St Polyeuktos, which was said to have been extremely large, and known to have born inscriptions which praised her imperial ancestry and heritage; it has been suggested that the Hagia Sophia was built on such an enormous scale to compete with it. She is recorded as having died by 527, but her activities during Justin and Justinian's joint reign and earlier, certainly within living memory, became rooted in the cultural memory of the city: J. D. Alchermes, 'Art and Architecture in the Age of Justinian', in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005), pp.343-75, pp.364-5.

[87] Bardill, 'The Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus', p.4. These are traditional descriptors but the two can be associated more closely with each other due to the relatively close timings of their creation. See C. L. Connor, 'The Epigram in the Church of Hagios Polyeuktos in Constantinople and its Byzantine Response', *Byz* 69 (1999), pp.479-527, particularly pp.511-2, for further detail.

[88] While I have argued that the representations of empresses were moving into the sphere of imperial victory, it would be a step too far to argue that they could be portrayed as soldiers, as emperors were. The image of imperial victory is perhaps more of a passive role than the active role of soldier and conqueror.

through the association of empresses with Helena and her piety, using her as a model for imperial power.[89] Whilst this is a convincing argument, it suggests that it was the accession of Justin I which marked a definitive break with the old ruling houses. However, this does not take into account the reign of Leo – a general unrelated to the ruling families – and that Verina was the most prolifically represented on different coin types since Flaccilla and Helena. The forced abdication of Romulus Augustulus in 476 may have constituted a definitive break, as they argued, but the Eastern Roman Empire was still placing its hopes on Julius Nepos (*de facto* ruler until 480) who minted his own coinage, and also does not take into consideration that Constantinople was going through its own political upheaval during the years around this break, as has been discussed in the previous chapter.

More contemporary elements should also be considered. The previous empress, Lupicina-Euphemia, had not been portrayed on coinage during Justin's reign, which meant that no empress had been depicted on a coin since Ariadne, nearly forty years previously, and even then her types had been incredibly few with no examples in the everyday, base metal denomination.[90] Thus, perhaps representations of empresses on coins were simply not considered the norm anymore.[91] Of course, it could be that Theodora was in fact depicted on select *solidi*, similarly to Ariadne, but these examples have not survived to the present day, though this seems unlikely. One might also reflect on her origins; would it have been appropriate for a former actress to appear on coins that spread throughout the empire? However, this argument should not

[89] Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', p.582.
[90] See second case study for discussion on Ariadne's coins.
[91] Brubaker & Tobler, 'The Gender of Money', p.581.

be given too much consideration: as has been discussed, her image appeared alongside Justinian's in several high-profile areas, including on the altar-cloth in Hagia Sophia, which suggests that public-facing, official representations of her were not inappropriate. It seems most likely that the declining trend of putting empresses on coins, the large gap in representational continuity, and the lack of competing imagery – only in terms of women on coins, and not male imperial imagery – meant that Theodora's image was not a necessity numismatically.

3.4.3 Comparative Coinage in the Sixth Century

Theodora's known images can, of course, be compared across a range of media, specifically with other images on coins. The closest image of an imperial female on a coin chronologically is the image of Sophia, the successor of Theodora's office, and married to Justin II. Sophia appeared on coinage from the beginning of her reign with Justin and continued with little change until his death in 574 (fig.1.37). It is unusual that Sophia appeared on coinage whereas Theodora did not. The sources suggest that she was instrumental in Justin's reign, especially when tied in with his ill-health.[92] However, this was unlikely to be the reason for her appearance on the coinage alongside Justin, as she appeared in this medium from the very beginning of his reign in 565. We might also consider this reinvention of the empress' image on coins to be as part and parcel of the portrayal of the imperial unit. By this point, Theodora had been dead for seventeen years but had continued to appear in the material record –

[92] Evagrios, V. 11. Cameron, 'The Empress Sophia', p.9, argues that Sophia was very much centre stage from the beginning of their reign.

mosaics, inscriptions – during the later years of Justinian's reign, thus signalling a continuation of this representation of office. Perhaps the new coin types then, with the imperial couple enthroned together, was a clear way for the new regime to consolidate their own rule; by announcing the rule of the imperial unit through base metal coins that were spread across the empire.[93]

On comparing Sophia's and Theodora's image, it can be seen that their regalia was, in essence, the same: both wear a similarly-shaped crown, *pendilia*, chlamys and bejewelled neck. Though both are associated with Christian symbols in these contexts, they are represented with different ones: in her coins, Sophia carried a cross-topped sceptre, whereas Theodora proffered a paten. This was likely due to the contexts in which their representations were found: Theodora was being portrayed in an offertory procession, whereas the religious iconography on the coinage symbolised something closer to rule through, and due to, Christianity. On the coins, Sophia and Justin are seated together on a lyre-backed throne, whereas in the San Vitale mosaics, Theodora and Justinian are standing frontally, and are on opposite sides of the apse. Although the latter were clearly meant to be viewed as a pair, as discussed, this would likely have not always been obvious for anyone performing the service, or participating on the sides of aisles, as discussed. The coins, on the other hand, would have been easily accessed by most of the population during Justin's tenure and likely beyond.

[93] It has been argued that Sophia was a close relative of Theodora; John of Ephesus claims Sophia was her niece: John Eph., II. 10; Cameron, 'The Empress Sophia', pp.5-6. If this was the case, it might be that her image was used as a source of legitimacy for Justin's rule: a familial link to the previous imperial couple.

Conclusion

Overall, Theodora's image was the culmination of a transformation that had been taking place over the entirety of the Late Antique period. The portrayal of the earlier Roman empress who was represented with no jewellery and was rarely seen even with a diadem had been gradually replaced as one who was elaborately festooned with pearls and jewels and wearing a high crown; by the time of Theodora's portrayal in Ravenna, there was a distinct costume assigned to representations of imperial women. This further suggests the zenith of this development: the creation of a distinct office, one that could not be confused with the roles of other elite women, alongside the presentation of the emperor and the empress as the imperial unit. This is clearly played out in the number of images and descriptions where they are portrayed together, as well as the Christianising connotations that usually accompany them. This taps into the idea of competition; the empress' representation was being used to challenge and solidify the power of the imperial couple.

Finally, it should also be pointed out at this juncture that the next step in the transformation of the empresses' representation was one that, to some minds, might constitute a step back. Even though the coins of the later sixth century do not name their empresses, indicating a depersonalisation and thus a lack of authority on the part of individual empresses, the office of the empress is still being represented, complete with regalia and Christian imagery. Furthermore, the emperor and empress are depicted enthroned together – again portraying this imperial unit. Change begins to come about again when heirs start to be introduced numismatically. This leads this thesis on to the next case study, that of Martina.

Chapter Four: Martina

The seventh century was certainly a period of change for many reasons, one of which was the definitive defeat of the Persians, a long-time enemy of the Byzantines, by Herakleios and their subsequent incorporation into the growing expanse of the Islamic caliphate within the 630s. It was also a period of massive territorial changes within the Byzantine Empire, again due to the expansion of the Islamic Caliphate, which quickly subsumed much of the Middle East, North Africa and the eastern borders of the Byzantine Empire. With the loss of land came the loss of tax revenue, a break down in relied-upon trade routes – specifically Egypt, the 'bread basket' of the Byzantines – and, some would argue, a loss in confidence within Byzantine society in their leaders and their forms of religious veneration.[1] With the exception of Herakleios (610-41) and Constans II (641-68), the reigns of the later emperors of the seventh century, moving into the eighth, were often short-lived. Indeed, perhaps because of this instability, there is little in the way of extant imagery that can be identified as being that of an empress of the seventh century. However, coinage from the reign of Herakleios is extant in the historical record, which may shed some light on the portrayal of the empress during this period. Thus, for the seventh-century case study, Martina will be discussed, though there is still some debate as to which *augusta* the coinage discussed in this chapter represents.

Martina was the second wife of Herakleios and, to the dismay of contemporary and later sources, was also his sister's daughter, making this a marriage between uncle and niece, which was uncanonical.[2] Her representation

[1] This is expanded on in detail in Brubaker & Haldon, *Iconoclast Era: The History*, pp.9-66.
[2] Some sources, such as Antiochus Strategos, thought that Martina was his cousin: S. Spain Alexander, 'Heraclius, Byzantine Imperial Ideology, and the David Plates', *Speculum* 52.2 (1977), pp.217-37, p.225, analyses and gives the translation. Regardless, the sources

in the sources tends to reflect this situation; she was either condemned or was omitted entirely. However, as the imperial war hero who recovered the True Cross from their enemies, Herakleios escaped harsh censure in the sources on this front. Martina may have had up to nine children during her union with Herakleios, one of whom, Constantine Herakleios – also known as Heraklonas – was portrayed on his coinage as a junior emperor (fig.1.45), alongside his older half-brother, Herakleios Constantine – who would later become Constantine III.[3]

After Herakleios' death in 641, Martina was portrayed as taking part in intrigue, scheming to get her own children on the throne, and murdering the son from Herakleios' first marriage to Fabia-Eudokia, to make room for their accession.[4] However, as is often the case, this account should be taken with a pinch of salt, especially when considering the already negative impression of Martina in the sources, due to her inappropriate marriage. Yet on Constantine III's death, Martina's son Heraklonas did take over the throne, though due to his young age, Martina acted as regent. Yet, within the year, Martina and Heraklonas had been deposed, mutilated, and exiled. Hence, Martina has been chosen for this case study, first of all because of her potential portraiture on the coinage of this period, but also because of the significance of her positioning; firstly as the disapproved of wife and empress of a war-hero, and secondly as

---

were aware of a close blood link, judged it to be unlawful, and thus brought it to the fore when looking to portray either Herakleios or Martina negatively.

[3] For examples of this type, see P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol II, Part I: Phocas and Heraclius (602-641)* (Washington D.C., 1968): *DOC II.I,* cat.39, & *BIFA,* B2960.

[4] Theophanes, AM 6121, p.461, alongside Pyrros, the intermittent patriarch of Constantinople, who was also a known heretic, having Monothelete tendencies. In this passage, Theophanes described both the 'Senate and the City [driving] out Pyrros for his impiety together with Martina and her son'.

the regent of her son, Heraklonas. Her depiction as pious and discussion of patronage will also be examined in the latter section of this chapter.

4.1 Numismatic Evidence

In the silver and base metal series issued during the tenure of Herakleios, the female figure, occasionally used on these coins, has traditionally been identified as Martina. However, from 1995 onwards this has been a subject of debate. Zuckerman began the discussion by identifying the problems within the chronology of Herakleios' reign in comparison to the issue dates of these coins and inferred from this that the female figure must have been Epiphania, Herakleios' daughter by his first wife, Fabia-Eudokia.[5] Zuckerman acknowledged four coin types as portraying the imperial female figure in this period: Carthaginian *siliqua*, with a male military bust on the obverse and a male and a female bust on the reverse; *folles* of Cherson, with three imperial figures, two on the obverse, one on the reverse; *folles* from eastern mints, with three figures on the obverse; and Roman and Ravennate half-*folles* and *folles,* respectively, with three crowned busts on the obverse.[6]

On the *folles* type of the eastern mints, the female figure was in the position of secondary honour, and thus above Herakleios Constantine, but through size and positioning was clearly secondary to Herakleios in the centre (fig.1.47).[7] She was holding the *globus cruciger*, dressed in a *chlamys* and

[5] C. Zuckerman, 'La petite Augusta et le Turc. Epiphania-Eudocie sur les monnaies d'Heraclius', *Revue Numismatique* 150 (1995), pp.113-26, pp.114, 120.
[6] Zuckerman, 'La petite Augusta', p.114.
[7] *DOC II.I*, cat.96. The *augusta* being depicted in the position above the heir in the visual hierarchy can certainly be seen in the coins of Maurice, Constantia, and Theodosios from Cherson.

wearing a pinnacled and cross-topped diadem, with *pendilia*. In the same vein, however, the bust of the female figure on the Carthaginian *siliqua* was in the least position, being in the secondary position on the reverse (fig.1.46), so how much can realistically be gleaned from this assessment of the visual hierarchy in this instance is probably minimal. However, the female figure was again dressed in imperial costume, with a cross-topped diadem and *pendilia*, unmistakable in her appearance as the empress. There was also a cross in the field above the imperial female and male, likely Herakleios Constantine due to his *chlamys,* as opposed to the militarily-garbed Herakleios on the obverse.[8]

As these coins dated from 615-629, for Zuckerman, the appearance of the female figure was too early to be Martina, and thus must have been Epiphania, who had been crowned as *augusta* approximately a year and a half after her birth, just after the death of Fabia-Eudokia.[9] The female figure also disappeared in the same year as Epiphania was believed to have left Constantinople to marry a Turkic ruler.[10] Herrin argued that in desperation, the widowed Herakleios crowned his infant daughter as *augusta* and carried her image with him whilst on campaign, in the hopes of making a suitable match – though this ignores the convention that imperial exogamic practices were not the norm in the Eastern Roman Empire.[11] Though conclusory comments on the

[8] *BIFA*, B3607. James, *Empresses and Power*, p.111, supported this interpretation of the identification.
[9] Theophanes, AM 6102, p.428, for Epiphania's birth in the August of 611; AM 6104, p.430, for Epiphania's coronation as *augusta* in the November of 612. Theophanes, AM 6105, p.430, gives Herakleios' marriage to Martina as being in 613, but in the notes, Mango et al. asserted that evidence from other sources, such as *Chron. Pasch.* 714, placed it as being closer to 623-4.
[10] Zuckerman, 'La Petite Augusta', p.114.
[11] J. Herrin, 'Marriage: A Fundamental Element of Imperial Statecraft', in J. Herrin (ed.), *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ, 2013), pp.302-20, p.308, gives an overview of the event as portrayed in the *Short History* of Patriarch Nikephoros, though does not explain why, or for what, Herakleios was 'desperate'. See Nikephoros, Ιστορία σύντομος, ed. C. de Boor, *Nicephori opuscula historica* (Leipzig, 1880),

dating issues during the chronology of Herakleios' reign are beyond the remit of this thesis, it should still be taken into consideration when examining the representations of the empress on coinage produced during this period.

One coin issue in the Dumbarton Oaks collection seems to point to the purposeful destruction of the imperial female figure represented on it, possibly through hammering.[12] This has been taken as evidence by some, such as Garland, that this figure was at least perceived as representing Martina, and an angry populace, in reaction to the incestuous marriage and her general unpopularity, was therefore defacing her representation on coinage.[13] This kind of public action – the destruction of representations of imperial figures to show disapproval – has been seen in this period prior to this instance. In 387, for instance, the statues of Theodosios I and Flaccilla were torn down in Antioch by angry mobs protesting a new imperial tax.[14] It was not so much an act of *damnatio memoriae* but rather a method of showing discontent with the ruling bodies, through the demolition of their public representation. However, as the numismatic defacement has only been seen to occur on one coin, it is arguably a stretch to suggest either a concerted effort to destroy Martina's image, or to take it as evidence that definitively points to widespread feelings of ill will: more evidence of defacement would be required to create a convincing argument.

---

trans. C. Mango (ed.), *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople: Short History*, DOT 10, CFHB 13 (Washington D.C., 1990): Nike. Pat., 18.
The imperial women of the Western Roman Empire did sometimes marry exogamically, however. For a discussion on exogamic marriages and an overview of earlier Byzantine exogamic marriages, or lack thereof, see L. A. Wainwright, 'Import, Export: The Global Impact of Byzantine Marriage Alliances during the Tenth Century' in L. Brubaker, R. Darley & D. Reynolds (eds), *Global Byzantium*: *Proceedings of the 50th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Abingdon & New York, NY, forthcoming).

[12] *DOC II.I*, cat.99a.1

[13] *DOC II.I*, pp.216-7, 292; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, p.62.

[14] Theodoret of Kyrrhos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία, ed. L. Parmentier (Berlin, 1954); trans. B. Jackson, *The Writings of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, *Series II, Vol. III* (Oxford, 1892): *Theodoret*, V.19; Theophanes AM 5883, p.110.

However, iconographically and contextually, Martina would be the most logical choice for the identification of this imperial female figure. Within the numismatic record, it was incredibly rare that daughters were depicted on coinage during the reigns of their fathers, and when they did appear, they were included because of their marriages to men who were on track to become the next emperor.[15] In comparison, representations of sisters are somewhat more frequent:[16] if this female figure was portrayed during the reign of Herakleios Constantine, or on coin types where he was the only imperial male – which would be very unlikely during the reign of his father – then an identification of Epiphania would be more suitable. In terms of females related by blood, it was the mother of the emperor who appeared most commonly on coins, especially during the regency of their infant sons, though this is a trend that nominally appeared in the Middle Byzantine period;[17] we might have expected Martina to have appeared on coins of Heraklonas had the regency lasted longer.

As the wife of the emperor and as the *augusta*, an understanding of Byzantine conventions suggests that Martina is the most suitable identification for the imperial female figure. Even within the most contemporary numismatic

[15] The marriage coin of Valentian III and Licinia Eudoxia is a prime example of this: see Chapter Two: Aelia Ariadne for further discussion (2.1.1). The exception to this rule is the rare *nomismata* type of Theophilos (829-42), see P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol III, Part I: Leo III to Michael III (717-867)* (Washington D.C., 1973): *DOC III.I,* cat.407. This *nomisma* depicted three of his daughters, who are named in the surrounding legend; Thekla, Anna, and Anastasia

[16] Pulcheria was often depicted on coins during the reign of Theodosius II, during her rule as regent and after he had reached his majority. Thekla was depicted on the regency coinage of Theodora and Michael III (fig.2.5). Zoe and Theodora were depicted on coins together during their co-ruler (1042), see Chapter Eight: Zoe Porphyrogennete.

[17] Eirene of Athens on the coins of Constantine VI (regency: 780-90, 792-797) (fig.2.3a-b), see Chapter Five: Eirene of Athens. Theodora, on the coins of Michael III (regency: 842-55)(fig.2.5); Zoe Karbonopsina, on the coins of Constantine VIII (regency: 914-9) (fig.2.6); Eudokia Makrembolitissa, on the coins of her sons (regency: 1067-8, 1071) (fig.2.30a-b). In the ninth century, Eudokia Ingerina was one of a few empresses who were displayed as both mother and empress, see Chapter Six: Eudokia Ingerina.

productions, the only live figures who were represented – other than the emperor – were, in rare instances, the son and heir, and, more usually, the *augusta*.[18] From 565 onwards, the historical record provides numerous instances of joint rules depicted numismatically. There are many extant examples of *folles* representing Justin II and Sophia (565-74); both were depicted as nimbate, seated on a lyre-backed throne, crowned, and in elaborate imperial costume – Sophia also held a cross-topped sceptre, and her crown was pinnacled, with *pendilia* (fig.1.37) indicating her role as empress. The coins of Tiberios II Constantine and Ino-Anastasia (574-82), and Maurice and Constantia (582-601), although both are rare and only minted at Thessaloniki, also followed this pattern, as did the base metal types of Phokas and Leontia (601-10) (fig.1.39), which were much more numerous. One base metal *folles* type of Maurice – though notably only on the coin types from Cherson – was somewhat different to the norm; their son, Theodosios, was represented on the reverse of the coin, while his parents, Maurice and Constantia were figured on the obverse in keeping with the numismatic tradition as described above (fig.1.38).

Yet what is most significant here is that, whilst the emperor was named in the numismatic legend, the empress was not. It has been convincingly argued that it was the message of imperial unity that was being conveyed through the production of these coins, and no more so than in the reign of the usurper Phokas, indicated by the comparatively high number of coins that were

[18] The exception here are the coins issued from Carthage during Herakleios' rebellion against Phokas (608-10), which depicted Herakleios' father, also named Herakleios, with whom he was working in cohort: *DOC II.I*, cat.1-6. However, as these were coins with imperial aspirations attached to them, they could be seen to be working within the context of the Maurice-Theodosios coin types.

produced with the couple's image on them.[19] The frequency of the issues should also be noted: only Justin II and Sophia, and Leontia and Phokas were numismatically represented together, throughout their reign. Of the imperial rulers in the interim between these two reigns, the coins showing the imperial couple were only issued at the beginning of each reign, when the hold on imperial power was often tenuous. It has been argued that it was important to represent Sophia and Leontia because their image helped to legitimise the emperor – Sophia was the link with the previous ruling couple, being the niece of the previous empress, Theodora, and became a regent to Justin II during his episodes of mental instability; as a usurper, the onus was on Phokas to portray himself as legitimate an emperor as possible, which included portraying himself next to an *augusta*.[20] Additionally, the coin types of Maurice from Cherson were arguably issued due to the unrest that Maurice was struggling to control.[21]

Thus, irrespective of whether the imperial female figure can be identified as Martina or Epiphania, what is important to note is that it was the office of the empress that was represented in this period, and continuously since the mid-sixth century. This, together with the representation of the emperor, and in some issues, the son and heir, highlighted the empress as the signifier of stability, continuation, and legitimacy, thus clearly linking back to the conventions established and developed upon throughout the Roman and Late Antique periods. This continuous trend certainly also highlighted the concept of the rule of the imperial unit that had been represented in a variety of media

[19] Brubaker & Tobler, 'Gender and Money', pp.584-5, 587.
[20] Brubaker & Tobler, 'Gender and Money', pp.586-7. See Chapter Three: Theodora for discussion on Sophia's background (3.4.3).
[21] James, *Empresses and Power*, p.110. It should be noted here that as Theodosios was on the reverse of the coin, he was in the lowest position within the visual hierarchy.

with increasing frequency throughout the past century. They were also associated with Christian imagery, either through the cross-topped sceptres that they carried, the cross-on-steps on the reverse of the coin, or the cross in field, further emphasising the connection between imperial rule and piety.

4.2 Silver Plates

Additionally, it has been argued by scholars that the image of Martina could be found represented in an item from a group of seventh-century silver plates, collectively known as the David Plates. The nine silver plates are currently split between the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the Archaeological Museum in Nicosia, Cyprus. These luxury items depicted scenes from the canonical life of the Hebrew king, David, such as the battle of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:39-54); David being armed for battle (1 Samuel 17:38); and David anointed by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1-13).[22] On the basis of the control stamps found on the back of the plates, scholars have variously argued for a date somewhere in the first two-thirds of Herakleios' reign.[23] Spain Alexander, instead, argued for a later date within Herakleios' reign, specifically after his victories over the Persians and the reclaiming of the True Cross; she tied the representation of David with Herakleios, and argued that Herakleios' later reign was focused on associating his own figure with that of David.[24] Wander has argued that these luxury plates were commissioned – by

[22] Plate of the battle of David and Goliath, Metropolitan Museum, New York, inv.17.190.396; Plate of the arming of David, Metropolitan Museum, inv.17.190.399; Plate of David being anointed by Samuel, Metropolitan Museum, inv.17.190.398.
[23] Spain Alexander, 'The David Plates', pp.217-8 gives an overview of the reasons behind the dating: the dating was also based on stylistic grounds, through comparisons with imperial portraiture on coins.
[24] Spain Alexander, 'The David Plates', pp.218, 226-7.

an elite member of his court, though they could equally have been commissioned by Herakleios or another member of his family – to commemorate Herakleios' victory over the Persians, specifically that he defeated the Persian general, Razatis, in hand-to-hand combat, even beheading his enemy, just like Goliath.[25]

Iconographically speaking, it has long been agreed that the depiction of the figure of David was meant to emphasise a parallel with Herakleios; the portrayal of four imperial ceremonies, the imperial sceptre, palatial architecture, and that David is nimbate, all point to this.[26] In the 1970s, Wander also argued that the nine David plates formed a cohesive group which would have been arranged in a certain order: the largest plate of the battle of David and Goliath would have formed the central circle, and the rest of the plates would have been arranged around it (fig.1.48), making up the basic form of the monogram of Christ.[27] This would suggest an elite audience, for the expense – and thus value – and particular formation would have, by necessity, required an elite, private space – a court setting – and an audience capable of interpreting the Christian meanings, which interlinked with the underlying imperial ideology: Herakleios was chosen by God, just as David was, to defeat the enemies of those of the empire, the chosen people.

---

[25] A Merovingian chronicler, Fredegar, described the battle and compared Herakelios as a 'second David': *Chronicle, Book IV,* ed. & trans. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar: with its Continuations,* Mediaeval Classics (London, 1960): *Chron. Fred.*, pp.52-3. Wander claimed that ambassadors brought 'this tale across Europe' in 629 to reach the court of King Dagobert, and thus Fredegar: S. H. Wander, 'The Cyprus Plates and the 'Chronicle' of Fredegar', *DOP* 29 (1975), pp.345-6, p.346. Byzantine sources on the battle: Theophanes AM 6118, p.449; Nike. Pat., 19.

[26] A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin*, (Paris, 1936), p.96f. I would also add that the appearance of the *manus dei*, blessing David in the Battle of David and Goliath plate, additionally brings about connotations with the office of the emperor.

[27] S. H. Wander, 'The Cyprus Plates: The Story of David and Goliath', *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 8 (1973), pp.89-104, p.95.

Specifically, for the purposes of this case study, one of the silver plates, which portrayed the marriage of David and Michal (1 Samuel 18:20-28), has been cautiously suggested to portray Martina, hidden within the features of Michal (fig.1.49). Spain Alexander saw this plate as an antetype for the union of Herakleios and Martina 'as [their marriage] wanted some form of sanction' due to its scandalous nature.[28] This plate can be compared with the marital scenes found on marriage coin issues of Licinia Eudoxia and Valentinian III (437) (fig.1.27), Pulcheria and Marcian (450) (fig.1.28), and Ariadne and Anastasios (491) (fig.1.26); it was very similar in terms of stance and positioning, and thus the canonical scene fits in with and associates itself with the standard representations of imperial unions.[29]

Regardless of whether the Michal figure was meant to represent Martina, it can at least be stated that the figure brings forth connotations with that of the office of the empress. The joint hands and imperial poses – also indicated by the central figure which gazes directly at the viewer – of the prominent male and female figure bring forth the connotations of the inscription 'FELICITER NVBTIIS', 'felicitous nuptials', which accompanied these formulaic Late Antique marital scenes. The palatial settings and the bags of largesse at the bottom of the plate no doubt indicated the prosperity brought about by the fortunate nature of imperial marriage, which was also symbolised by elite and imperial women, as seen in the iconography of the Trier ceiling, once argued to have represented Helena.[30] Their nimbate and elite apparel also reminded of their

[28] Archaeological Museum, Nicosia, inv. J452.
[29] See Chapter Two: Aelia Ariadne for discussion on positioning. In the latter two images, Christ takes the central role, but Theodosios, as the father, takes the central role in the coin of Valentinian III and Licinia Eudoxia, thus allowing for further comparison; it was Saul, the father of Michal, who was depicted in the centre of the plate scene.
[30] See Chapter One: Flavia Iulia Helena, for earlier discussion on the Trier ceiling.

status and their piety. Thus, although not represented as the empress, the depiction of this plate certainly emphasised several of the key characteristics of one and would have been an appropriate scene for display in the Constantinopolitan court, especially one which had been focused on the scandalous marriage of their emperor and empress and was looking to refocus in the light of Herakleios' triumph.

4.3 Literary Evidence

Scholars have long seen the period after the defeat of the Persians as one in which the True Cross was 're-invented', and wherein Herakleios was able to reinvent himself, and his reputation.[31] As well as King David, it has also been suggested that Herakleios attempted to portray himself, or at least associate his reign, with that of Constantine the Great. Not only was Herakleios then a war hero, but he was also able to make the most of the ideological ramifications of his victory: as Constantine made the lands of the Romans safe for Christians, so too did Herakleios make the 'Holy Lands' safe; as Constantine built the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and created a place for the relics of the True Cross, so too did Herakleios bring back the relics of the True Cross to Jerusalem and rebuild Christian monuments.[32] Through the association of his later reign with the True Cross, Herakleios was thus able to compare himself to Constantine; this included several of his sons being given some kind of Constantinian designation. His two sons and junior emperors, for instance, were called

[31] A. Frolow, 'La Vraie Croix et les expeditions d'Héraclius en Perse', *REB* 11 (1953), pp.88-93, pp.101-5. Herakelios specifically did this, according to Frolow, to cleanse his reputation from the damage incurred by his marriage to his niece.
[32] Spain Alexander, 'The David Plates', pp.225-6, gives an overview of the evidence that suggests the source material compared Herakleios to Constantine.

Herakleios Constantine (Constantine III, son of Fabia-Eudokia) and Constantine Herakleios (Heraklonas, son of Martina).

Martina, however, was not recorded in kind as a 'New Helena' or associated as such as other empresses had been when the appellation of 'New Constantine' and their variations were bestowed upon the emperors with which they ruled.[33] This again gives credence to the argument put forward by Georgiou: the mention or omission of Helena in her role as pious empress was used to either praise or criticise, respectively, the current empress.[34] In this case, we see the empress critiqued by the sources' silence on this matter. It would have sense if the imperial couple had attempted to make this kind of correlation, to buoy Herakleios' attempt to link himself with Constantine. In fact, we do see that Martina was crowned in the Augustaion, where a statue of Helena stood; Angelova argues that this was an attempt to explicitly link Martina to Helena and thus the model of the ideal empress.[35] Her appearance, with her family, on coinage with the True Cross on the reverse could also be argued to evoke this association. Yet, if there was an attempt to create these connotations, it is not apparent in the historical record, or is explicitly not mentioned. Furthermore, there are no textual records that identify imagery of Martina – even the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* falls silent on this issue – as

---

[33] Examples included Pulcheria and Marcian, by the Council of Chalcedon in 451: *AOC II*, 2, 101; Lupicina-Euphemia and Justin I at the Council of 518: see *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collection,* ed. G. D. Mansi, 31 vols (Florence & Venice, 1758-98, repr. Paris, 1901-27): Mansi, VIII pp.1061-6. Justin II and Sophia were acclaimed as such by Venantius Fortunatus, among others: Venantius Fortunatus, *Opera Poetica,* ed. F. Leo, MGH AA 4 (Berlin, 1894), trans. J. George, *Venantius Fortunatus: Personal and Political Poems* (Liverpool, 1995): Venantius, App.2: 65-70. Eirene of Athens and Constantine VI after the restoration of the veneration of icons, Council of Nikaea in 787.

[34] Georgiou, 'Helena', p.623, though Georgiou does not take the source analysis of Martina far enough in this instance. See Chapter One: Flavia Iulia Helena, for earlier discussion on Georgiou's work.

[35] Theophanes, AM 6105, p.430; Angelova, *Sacred Founders,* p.172. For the statue of Helena in the Augustaion, *Chron. Pasch.,* 528-9; Malalas, 13.8; and potentially *Patria,* 2.15 - see discussion in Chapter 1.6.

being placed within the urban topography of the city or provincially. There is also nothing in the historical record, such as statue bases, which gives evidence for statuary representation or otherwise.

As with patriographical representation, Martina was largely omitted from texts of the historical record; she was not even recorded as having patronised religious institutions or other buildings, as were most other empresses of this period.[36] The *Chronicon Paschale* only mentioned her once, unusual for the public figure of the empress, and that was in reference to her attendance for the celebrations for Easter in 624; the source did not mention Martina and Herakleios' marriage at all.[37] Martina was also described as entering the newly reclaimed Jerusalem with Herakleios as a part of the triumphal procession, though this was not mentioned by all of the sources who discussed the event.[38] Although these are only passing mentions, it does indicate that Martina was engaging with her role as the empress during Herakleios' reign by taking part in ceremonial events. Though being involved in military ceremonies might be seen as an unusual development, it does tie in with the tradition of empresses being associated with imperial victory; in representation and now in ceremony.

In describing the events of Herakleios Constantine's death, Martina was uniformly blamed by the source material for murdering Herakleios' first-born son with poison, with the help of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrros, who

[36] James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.19, 151, 157. This latter point, however, could merely be a matter of survival, rather than Martina's inactivity or the hostility of the sources, but has also been suggested to indicate why she was so unpopular within Constantinople: Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, p.63.
[37] The translators, Whitby and Whitby, noted the source's unusual brevity on the subject: *Chron. Pasch.*, xxv.
[38] Spain Alexander, 'The David Plates', pp.220, 225. This, again, could have been an attempt at linking with Helena and her journey, but is certainly not made obvious.

was also a heretic.[39] Thus, not only was the empress associated with an impious, heretical character such as Pyrros, but Martina was also further led astray from the office of the empress in its role as the protector and continuator of the security of the empire, by murdering the true heir in favour of her son which, Theophanes indicated, led directly to instability in the empire, and their own deposition and usurpation. Her actions regarding Herakleios Constantine were directly connected, by Theophanes, to the usurpation of her regency and of her son, Heraklonas, and their subsequent mutilation.[40] The gendered behaviour portrayed in this segment played into Late Antique and Roman conventions surrounding negative portrayals of women and 'ambitious' attitudes.[41] Martina's reported actions, through the use of poison and the murder of Herakleios Constantine, firmly placed her in the traditional category of the 'evil' powerful woman, along with previous powerful figures that were strongly disapproved of in the historical record.[42] By having the Senate reject Martina and Heraklonas in favour of Constans II – whose hereditary link to

---

[39] Theophanes, AM 6121, p.461.

[40] Theophanes, AM 6133, pp.474-5. Martina's tongue was cut out and Heraklonas' nose was cut off. Less hostile sources may have indicated instead that Martina was acting in the role of a good, widowed mother by watching out for her children, a trope that comes more to the fore in later years of the empire: Hill, *Imperial Women*, pp.78-83.

[41] Galatariotou, 'Holy Women and Witches', pp.64-5 especially, discussed the negative archetype of the powerful woman, mixed with accusations of associations with the devil, witchcraft, and the administration of poisons and love philtres.

[42] Examples included Roman sources accusing Agrippina the Younger of poisoning her third husband, Emperor Claudius (41-54), to advantage her son, Nero (54-68), over Claudius' son from his third marriage, Britannicus: Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *Annales*, ed. & trans. M. Grant, *Tacitus: The Annals of Imperial Rome* (London, 1956, rev & repr. 1996): Tacitus, XII.62-66; Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *De Vita Caesarum,* ed. M. Ihm, *Suetonius De vita Caesarum libri viii* (Leipzig, 1908), trans. C. Edwards, *Suetonius: Lives of the Caesars,* Oxford World's Classics (Oxford, 2000): Suetonius, *Claud.*44. In a significant coincidence that mirrors Martina's situation, Claudius was also the uncle of Agrippina, and from the beginning of their marriage, their sons, Britannicus and Nero, were portrayed as joint heirs. A certain Martina was also known in the early years of the Roman Empire as being a great poisoner (Tacitus, II.74; III.7), alongside Locusta and Canidia: J. F. Borzelleca, & R. W. Lane, 'Harming and Helping through Time: The History of Toxicology', in A. Wallace Hayes (ed.), *Principles and Methods of Toxicology, Fifth Edition* (Andover, MA, 2008), pp.3-43, p.14; Ovid was known to refer to aconite (also known as wolfsbane or monkshood) as 'the mother-in-law's poison'.

Herakelios was outlined and thus emphasised – Theophanes confirmed their illegitimacy and unsuitability to rule, whilst Constans' was solidified, further underlined by indicating his long reign directly afterwards. Through the negative portrayal of Martina in the literary historical record, the varied facets of the office of the empress can be seen to be inverted: the expectation of the empress as one who secures the continuation of the family, and who provides legitimacy, was instead used to portray Martina in a negative light. This inversion nevertheless tells a modern audience of the continued use of these gendered, political roles and the adjoining expectations.

Conclusion

Overall, it can be seen that the representation of Martina, or at least, the image of a seventh-century Byzantine empress, does fit in to the conventions followed and developed throughout the past few centuries of the Byzantine Empire. Specifically, representation falls in line with the numismatic conventions of the late sixth century: it was the office of the empress which was portrayed, not the individual, as underlined by the lack of any name. That the imperial female figure appeared there with Herakleios and his sons, clearly linked back to the legitimisation of the imperial family and of the heirs to the imperial dignity. Just as Helena and her contemporaries appeared with personifications conveying those messages of security, stability, and continuation within the imperial family and thus the empire, so too did the representation of the empress in the seventh century carry on displaying these tropes. However, this is all turned on its head when looking at the minimal portrayal of Martina in contemporary texts: she was either omitted completely,

or the expectations of the empress were inverted to portray Martina in an entirely negative light. Yet, what this does indicate, through the enduring topos of literary subversion, is that the office of the empress continued to be pivotal within the Byzantine hierarchy, occupying a major role, and continued to hold on to its main properties throughout the Early Byzantine Empire.

Summary of the Representations of Early Empresses

In the Early Byzantine period, portraits of the empress went through an immense shift in terms of their representation and their public-facing role. Far from being indistinguishable from other elite women – for a variety of reasons which has been touched upon – by the sixth century, the representation of the office of the empress was considerably different from their more modest forebears in the early Imperial period, for whom even jewellery was considered an inappropriate accoutrement with which to be depicted. Though still idealised, there was a distinct pattern of imperial regalia that now had to be adhered to – earrings, *pendilia,* the large and jewelled diadem with elaborately-covered hair, and the purple *chlamys* – and, more often than not, they were nimbate, portrayed holding Christian imagery, and were at the forefront of any scenario, in a position secondary only to Christ, if present, and the emperor. The context in which they were portrayed is particularly telling also; from coinage, to consular diptychs, to monumental positions in key areas of the urban topography, the empress was shown more and more as part of the political hierarchy. Their depiction on luxury items – ivories, altar cloths – was further indicative of their status; only those of the highest status could be represented on such expensive materials and on the altar of Hagia Sophia, and their audience was thus highly selective.

Alongside this transformation in the representation of the office, it became increasingly unlikely, over the period that we have looked at, that the empress would be displayed as a solitary figure. This was also largely the case with representations of the emperor – the obvious exception here being the early sixth-century coins, with the emphasis on military costume and

representations as an active soldier. I would argue that from the late fourth to the sixth century, there was a definitive shift from the empress as the indistinguishable yet elite woman, to the visible and distinct other half of the fully formed imperial unit. That the office of the empress became associated with imperial victory, leaning in to military ceremony and costuming in a variety of media, is also apparent. What we see from the fifth and sixth century can be described as a visual parity between the emperor and empress, with the development of the empress consisting of 'striking innovations… [that] were still rooted in an existing discourse', which allowed for its successful and legitimate transformation.[1]

It could be suggested that this mirrored the shift away from the veneration of the imperial cult, which focused on the whole family, as well as their predecessors, to Christianity. As has been argued, the emperor was the representative of Christ on earth,[2] and within the transformed religious and imperial sphere during the early Byzantine period, the empress certainly had a place within this performative space. We thus see Ambrose of Milan comparing Helena to the Virgin Mary in his funeral oration,[3] Eudokia performing pilgrimages publicly,[4] and Pulcheria particularly emphasising her virginity and thus associating herself with the Virgin Mary.[5] Perhaps encouraging the perceptions of others in this regard was enough: through virginal associations and the multi-faceted religious activities that the empresses undertook –

---

[1] Angelova, *Sacred Founders,* p.263.
[2] For the emperor's role in religion, see G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Paris, 1996; trans & repr. Cambridge, 2003).
[3] Ambrose, 47-8. The opposite was also true; contemporary sources would compare the empress to 'bad' women from Biblical contexts to underline their negative attributes: Jezebel, Eve.
[4] See Holum, *Theodosian Empresses,* pp.184-9, 217-25, for full discussion on Eudokia's pilgrimages and her other religious activities.
[5] See Chapter Two: Aelia Ariadne, for discussion.

pilgrimage, the translation of relics, involvement in ecumenical councils, patronage of religious and philanthropic institutions, and, perhaps most importantly, being perceived as being active in this respect too – the office of the empress took on new meaning under the aegis of Christianity and piety.

This additionally firmly links with the prior point made; the churches patronised under the tenure of Justinian were patronised by both Justinian and Theodora as a distinct unit, portrayed as a joint endeavour. Thus, we can still observe their joint monograms carved into the capitals of Hagia Sophia, Hagia Eirene, Ss Sergios and Bakchos and elsewhere. This is further seen with the amount of epigraphy Theodora appears in, spread across the empire in mundane contexts, and in the ecclesiastical ones of Ss Sergios and Bakchos and St Catherine, Mount Sinai, even though Theodora was deceased by the time of the latter's completion. The patron of San Vitale even thought it appropriate to portray them together in an offertory procession in its apse, an act that Theodora, as a woman, would never have been able to carry out, as women were, at least in theory, forbidden to enter the space. These examples indicate that there was space in the cultural landscape for comparisons and associations to be made; this act of entering into the religious sphere and being perceived as being pious was, as James argued, a 'springboard into power',[6] that was made use of throughout the Byzantine period. This is also showcased through the representation of empresses in ceremonial and pious actions, and crucially, their patronage. Patronage often manifested itself as the visible indicator of status, wealth, piety and the expression of a myriad of other imperial virtues, and displaying the ability of empresses for competitive agency;

[6] James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.14-5.

underlining their legitimacy, perhaps in response to external influences, as well as how the office of the empress should be viewed.

Linking to this, an increasingly important facet in the representations of Byzantine empresses was their use of the iconography of Christianity, and therefore their perceived piety. This was a path that was set in motion either by Helena herself and her contemporaries, or those who could use her image and her burgeoning reputation to support their own agenda. After the tenure of Helena, gone were the personifications of security and fecundity for the empire; all the older imperial attributes were then implied by the divine approval shown through, for example, the cross-topped sceptres and *manus dei* crowning the imperial female figure. As such, it could be argued that the empress became a role model, not only for the inheritors of their office – as Helena so clearly was – but also for their female subjects. This can be made clear in the use of space and the positioning of the empresses' imagery; Theodora's impact in the sixth century might also be showcased here.

For Late Antique empresses, therefore, this can certainly be seen as a transformative period, one that seemed to mirror the transformation that the empire was going through. Representations that had developed alongside the same conventions – with some stylistic differences in terms of hairstyle, for example – since the earlier days of the Imperial Roman Empire – had changed entirely and were now practically unrecognisable when compared with the statuary of the earlier Roman empresses.[7] Some of the same attributes, however, still continued; piety and fidelity as female virtues, for example. Yet, towards the end of the sixth and the seventh century, the momentum of change

[7] Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, pp.339-41.

in and emphasis on representational depictions began to slow. Although empresses were still pictured numismatically – disregarding the gaps represented by Lupicina-Euphemia and Theodora – from Sophia onwards, the empresses were no longer named, their images were simply representational of their office. Their figures were depersonalised but still embodied the attributes of the office to the wider public, especially due to their much more frequent portrayal on base metal coinage, rather than the naturally sparser gold. Martina broke with this mould somewhat as, though she was represented with the emperor and the heir to imperial power, her image appeared only on the silver and base metal coinage of the period. Towards the end of this section, therefore, we begin to see the importance of children and heirs again: the coins of Maurice and Herakleios particularly are indicative of this. From this point, there is no extant physical imagery of Byzantine empresses up until the reign of Eirene at the end of the eighth century, to whom we shall now turn.

The Representations of Imperial Women of the Middle Byzantine Empire

Chapter Five: Eirene of Athens

After the sixth and early seventh century, there is a dearth of extant imagery of Byzantine empresses, until the reign of Eirene of Athens. On marrying into the imperial family in the seventh century, Eirene was able to manoeuvre to become one of only two women who held sole power, ruling from Constantinople, in the entirety of the Byzantine Empire. In 769, she arrived at the imperial palace from Athens, first landing at the port of Hiereia, with an entourage of warships and cargo ships *(dromones* and *chalendia* respectively) decorated with silken cloths, hinting at her background of a wealthy, military family; it is thought that her cousin, or other close male relative, was a patrician or possibly a *strategos* in the *thema* of Hellas.[1] It is not clear who her parents were, however, and it has been speculated that she may have been an orphan.[2] According to Theophanes, she was met on her arrival by high officials of the palace, both men and women, and the processional affair was spectacular.[3] She was first betrothed to Leo IV, with the patriarch in attendance, crowned in the Hall of Augusteus in the Great Palace a month later, and then went to the chapel of St Stephen in the Daphne where she received, alongside Leo, the marital crown.[4] In the year following this, Eirene gave birth to a son and heir to the imperial office, Constantine VI (776-80,780-97). He was crowned soon after his grandfather, Emperor Constantine V, died (775) and became co-emperor with Leo IV.

---

[1] Theophanes, AM 6261, p.613. See Herrin, *Women in Purple*, pp.53-8, for further speculation on her early life and family. Herrin suggests that Eirene was chosen by the emperor to link a local family in the *thema* of Hellas, possibly the Sarantapechy family, to the imperial one, supporting the assimilation of this province.
[2] Herrin, *Women in Purple*, pp.55-6. This seems unlikely given her advantageous marriage.
[3] Theophanes, AM 6261, p.613.
[4] Theophanes, AM 6261, p.613. Leo IV had already been crowned as co-emperor with his father, Constantine V, in 751 – Theophanes, AM 6241, pp.588-9.

The co-rule, however, did not last for long; Leo IV died in 780, just shy of ruling for five years. This left the infant Constantine in a vulnerable position, and Eirene became his regent for several years. Her seeming reluctance in the sources to allow Constantine sole rule when he reached his majority has been taken by many scholars as a sign of Eirene's ambition, and in an interesting display of gendered bias, her love of or greed for power.[5] Others have more reasonably posited that Eirene, and other political contemporaries, did not see Constantine as being particularly suited to the office of emperor, though again this is often laid at Eirene's door for being too controlling as a mother, and allowing the young emperor to rely on her too much.[6] Eirene is, of course, most infamous to Byzantinists for being written into the sources as the mother who blinded and overthrew her own son, Constantine VI, when they were vying for power in the 790s, with Eirene subsequently coming to sole rule in 797.[7] She was deposed in 802 and was exiled. However, as a female figure occupying a powerful, political role, it is likely that there will be particularly prejudicial elements within the literary source material surrounding Eirene, as it was written by elite males for an elite male audience. The sources will be evaluated carefully throughout this case-study, with the main reliance being on the physical material found within the historical record.

Eirene is an obvious choice for the eighth-century case study. As well as being the only woman to rule as sole empress for over a year in her own name – in fact, she ruled for five – and not only as a regent, Eirene broke the

[5] S. Runciman, 'The Empress Eirene the Athenian', in D. Baker (ed.), *Medieval Women*: *Dedicated and Presented to Professor Rosalind M. T. Hill on the Occasion of her Seventieth Birthday* (Oxford, 1978), pp.101-18; Diehl, *Figures byzantines*, pp.25-49.
[6] Herrin, *Women in Purple*, pp.51-129; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, pp.73-84, 93.
[7] The blinding was portrayed very negatively, even in the sources that tended to view Eirene favourably – Theophanes claimed there was an eclipse for seventeen days because of the monstrosity of this act: Theophanes, AM 6289, p.649.

predominant trend of not including female figures on coins, which had been in effect since the early seventh century. Additionally, she was the first imperial female to appear named, first of all on any seal, but also on that of an official's seal.[8] Though outside of numismatics and sigillographic evidence there are no extant images of Eirene left, she left a great impression on the sources – perhaps more so than her husband, Leo –[9] and some also alluded to the no-longer extant representations that she created on her own account, and those which were created for her. These sources, particularly the *Patria*, also give Eirene, sometimes jointly with Constantine, credit for the patronage of a variety of buildings, not just ecclesiastical but also civic, and the translation of relics. Due to her role in the short-lived reversal of iconomachy, she is also viewed in some texts very positively; as a pious empress. Her unique positioning within the political hierarchy, her portraiture returning to the coinage, and the pious activities she undertook, potentially framed in the Trier Ivory, as well as multi-faceted patronage, all make Eirene an ideal candidate for the purposes of this study.

5.1 Numismatic Evidence

Eirene was the first woman to be represented numismatically in over a century and a half: the last *augusta* figure to be depicted, as discussed in the case-study on Martina, appeared on the base metal and silver coins of Herakleios (610-41), but was not identified as such within the coins' legends.

[8] This is with the exception of the image of the Western Roman empress, Licinia Eudoxia, which was depicted on a seal in the Zacos collection: G. Zacos & A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals, Vol. 1* (Basel, 1972), cat.2759.
[9] Herrin, *Women in Purple*, p.129.

Prior to this representation, the figure of the empress appeared on the base metal coinage of the late sixth century, which were part of a series which depicted the imperial couple together, but which did not relate the name or titulature of that of the empress either. Thus, Eirene was the first empress on coinage, in either the base metal or gold denominations, which displayed her image, name, and title, since the late fifth century.[10]

5.1.1 Coins of the Seventh and Eighth Centuries

During the reign of her husband, Leo IV, the image of Eirene was not struck onto any coins. Instead, Leo followed the tradition which had started in the reign of Herakleios, continuing on and off throughout the seventh and the eighth century, of the emperor appearing with his son – sometimes even sons – and heir, designating them as senior and junior emperor respectively. In Leo's case, he was depicted on the obverse with his infant son Constantine VI, with their ancestors – Leo III and Constantine V – on the reverse (fig.2.1).[11] Over the course of the eighth century, as well as having their sons on their coins, the emperors of this period would also use the image of their deceased male relatives on the reverse, usually dressed in the *loros* to denote their status and to distinguish them from the live emperor, and his son.[12] This was done

[10] Ariadne was the last woman to have gold coins minted in her name: see her case study for further detail. Verina (457-c.484) was the last to have base metal coins minted solely in her name: *RIC X*, cat.656-7 (Leo I, East).
[11] *DOC III.I,* cat.1a.1-1b.5.
[12] **Leo III:** Earlier in his reign, Leo appeared by himself, and then with his son Constantine V; both are depicted solely in the *chlamys*. There is one rare coin type which could show Leo in the *loros*, though this is debateable - *DOC III.I,* p.225-40, for discussion. **Constantine V:** Appears with his son, Leo IV, in the *chlamys* on the obverse, with Leo III in the *loros* on the reverse - *DOC III.I.*, cat.2a.1-2g.4. **Leo IV:** Appears on the obverse with his son, Constantine VI, in the *chlamys*, and Leo III and Constantine V in the *loros* on the reverse – *DOC III.I*, cat.1a.1-1b.5.

consistently to link with the previous emperor and underline the familial links between them, thus indicating their legitimacy of rule.

During the regency of Constantine VI, Eirene appeared with him on the obverse, with three male figures on the reverse; Constantine's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather (fig.2.2).[13] In a break with convention, the deceased were shown in the *chlamys* – whereas previously they had been depicted in the *loros* – as was the young emperor, Constantine. Eirene, however, was wearing the *loros,* which is not only the first time that an imperial female ruling from Constantinople was depicted wearing this traditionally consular costume, but also portrays all of the male figures, both dead and alive, in the same costume.[14] As shown earlier, this costume was usually depicted to indicate the difference between the live, ruling emperor and his deceased ancestors, and had been used in such a fashion over the past fifty years. It is probable that the costumes were used in this fashion to distinguish the empress from the emperors, both alive and deceased, as they look visibly different. As seen in earlier chapters, empresses of the fourth-seventh centuries were often depicted in the *chlamys* – depicted in the empress ivories, the San Vitale mosaic, and the numismatic portrayals from Sophia onwards – so this was not a case of the 'appropriate' costume for the empress being the *loros* rather than the *chlamys*. Instead, it is possible to see Eirene here as the key focus of the coin type, as the one who is differentiated and stands out from the other imperial figures. This type, through portraiture costume and positioning,

[13] *DOC III.I*, cat.1.1-2.b*:* Leo III, Constantine V and Leo IV appear on the reverse, with the positions – both figural and in the legend – of honour (i.e. the central position) being awarded to the eldest of the dynasty, Leo III.
[14] There is precedent for an empress wearing the *loros*. There is an extant example of the Western Roman empress, Licinia Eudoxia, wearing it in the fifth century: *RIC X,* cat.2046 (Valentinian III), minted in Rome. Whether or not these coins were known in eighth-century Constantinople is debatable however.

thereby makes a statement about Eirene's role at this point; it was she who was central, crucial, to the young Constantine's reign, and this role, as well as that of Constantine's, was legitimised and approved by the predecessors on the reverse of the coin.

In the base metal type, Eirene was clearly displayed in the position of honour, still in the *loros*, whilst Constantine VI had been relegated to the reverse, squeezed above the officina mark of the coin (fig.2.3).[15] She thus becomes the most obvious imperial figure on the coinage, overtly portraying herself as the central authority, while still referencing the regency. When Eirene took over from Constantine VI as sole ruler (797-802), on the *nomismata* at least, she was depicted on both obverse and reverse, still in the *loros*, with *globus cruciger* in her right and cross-topped sceptre in her left, and wearing a two-pinnacled crown (fig.2.4).[16] This was the first time that an empress had appeared, in her own guise, name and by herself, on the obverse and reverse of a coin.[17]

This progression in positioning and the development of the costuming mirrors the progression of Eirene's role as empress. The message of the centrality of Eirene and her authority is clear, both on the gold, as well as the more widely spread, daily-use, base metal coins. However, the same is not true for Constantine: during his tenure as sole ruler (790-2), when Eirene was

[15] *DOC III.I*, cat.7.1-7.15. This is not without precedent; in an earlier type from the regency, the three predecessors, Constantine V, Leo III, and Leo IV, were also moved up to be above the officina mark on the reverse: *DOC III.I*, cat.5.1-6.5.
[16] *DOC III.I*, cat.1a.1-4. There are differences on the reverse but, by and large, Eirene's obverse image remains consistent. There is one exception in the Syracuse mint, which has Eirene in a *chlamys* on the obverse of the coin type: *DOC III.I*, cat.3. This type also continues Eirene's regency title as *augusta* (ΑΓΟSτ/ ΑΓΟVSτ), rather than the *basilissa* (bASILISSH) used during her sole rule.
[17] That is to say, that her identity was not elided with another personality.

removed from power, his image does not appear on a coin by itself.[18] This reiterates the importance of the office of the empress: even when removed from the central position of regent, the office was still represented on the coinage, the official output of the state. Eirene's numismatic representation also ties in to discussions of competitive agency. Eirene, as the central authority – and therefore most likely to have had input on the production of the coinage – is clearly presenting herself as the central figure, ahead of Constantine, the idea of which becomes even more emphatic when he is taken off the coinage entirely.

5.1.2 Imperial Regalia

As can be seen from comparisons between the coins of the late-sixth century and Eirene's types, the regalia had indeed changed over the past two hundred years, though not unrecognisably so. Similar to the female figures of the sixth century, Eirene was depicted on the regency coins as holding the cross-topped sceptre, but in her left hand, which points up to the left. She also now holds the *globus cruciger,* though sometimes when on the same side as her son, he holds it. The crown was changed to include four pinnacles, with a cross between them, instead of the elaborate sixth-century bouffant framed with pearls. Eirene was also depicted with two strands of *pendilia* descending from the crown – the previous empresses wore only one strand. Thus, we see the representations of the empress become more elaborate, indicating her status through the more ornate costume and the symbolic meaning of the accoutrements she holds.

[18] The same is not true of seals, which will be discussed in the next section. There are some changes stylistically however: *DOC III.I,* cat.2a-b, wherein Eirene does not hold the *globus cruciger*, for example.

As can be seen from this description above, Eirene is depicted in the *loros* in all of her coinage, which as noted was unusual for this period. This has led to discussion on her costume and its change from comparable coinage: what was the significance of the *chlamys* or the *loros*, and why? Thus, it may be necessary to explore this area of imperial regalia.

The *loros* evolved from the *toga trabea* which was worn by Roman consuls for ceremonial purposes.[19] Dateable consular diptychs from the fifth and sixth centuries show how the *toga trabea*/*loros* formed part of the regalia of the consul, which also included the *mappa,* held in the right hand, and the eagle-topped sceptre, held in the left – several examples of this can be seen in the consular diptychs, as well as on the coinage of emperors, when they had taken the office of consul.[20] The *loros* was a jewelled scarf of either leather or thickly embroidered silk, that could be worn around the neck in the X-form or, later, as a pullover, and fell down to cover most of the body.[21] The last consul was Anicius Faustus Albinus Basilius in 541; during the sixth century, the consulship had been slowly eroded and, after Basilius' tenure had ended, it became the sole purview of the emperor. Thus, for over a century after this period, emperors still presented themselves on their coinage with consular regalia.[22] After this period, as has been discussed previously, in the Isaurian

[19] J. Ball, *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth to Twelfth-Century Painting* (Basingstoke & New York, NY, 2005), p.12.
[20] See the consular diptychs of Boethius (487), Aerobindus (506), Anastasius (517), and Magnus (518) for the *loros*, *mappa* and eagle-topped sceptre. Other later consuls have cross-topped sceptres or busts (likely of the imperial image) atop their sceptres. Olovsdotter *Consular Image*, pl.6, 9, 11-13, 17.
[21] Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, p.12.
[22] For examples of this, see the coinage of Tiberios II, Maurice, Phokas, Herakleian Revolt, Justinian II, Leontios and Philippikos Bardanes. Philippikos is also the last emperor to hold the eagle-topped sceptre.

coinage the *loros* denoted deceased emperors; both junior and senior emperor wear the *chlamys*.

Eirene's coins, due to their unusual nature in terms of comparable material, have been used by scholars in a variety of ways, and have focused on the different component elements. For example, Herrin suggests that Eirene saw no need to co-opt images from Leo's coins as her new, 'sole rule [was] documented by new coin forms', leaving no uncertainty as to her authority.[23] I would disagree with this assessment, as stylistically it seems more like a progression from the regency coins, which certainly did draw on older models from the eighth century and depicted those previous rulers, and then advanced her own image forward, while still being rooted within traditional types. Kotsis, suggests that the images on coins minted during Eirene's sole reign conveyed a message of both imperial power vested in a woman, as well as an outward display of her iconophile standing and her most important accomplishment of ensuring and then embodying 'religious peace'.[24]

Garland suggests that her image being used on both the obverse and reverse of coins, and the use of *basilissa* in her legend, was to clearly affirm her sole rule, in the face of internal challenges and external pressures by rivals such as Charlemagne.[25] The internal challenges that required counteracting were the rebellions of Constantine's five uncles, her dead husband's brothers, among other issues.[26] Whether or not the external pressures of Charlemagne

[23] Herrin, *Women in Purple*, p.100
[24] K. Kotsis, 'Defining Female Authority in Eighth-Century Byzantium: The Numismatic Images of Empress Irene (797-802)', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 5.1 (2012), pp.185-215.
[25] Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, pp.87-8. Garland takes the traditional line that Charlemagne's coronation in St Peter's, Rome, in 800, as the 'Emperor of the Romans', was only able to take place because there was a woman in power in Byzantium.
[26] They were a thorn in Eirene's side from the beginning of her regency. After a plot was discovered, the brothers were forced to take holy orders, as well as being ordered to do

were significant, we do see Eirene's image as particularly visible during this period, and this is no doubt due to the exceptional position that she found herself in, as a woman and as a ruler with a shaky foundation of legitimacy. This also ties in with previous discussions about competitive agency. Here we see Eirene, who unlike our understanding of previous empresses, could have had some more input in the production of these coins, pushing an imperial portrait forward across her empire that was redolent with imperial imagery and that evolved alongside the changes in her reign, which clearly reflected her authority and sole rule. Through numismatic representation, she displayed her legitimacy to rule and challenged those rival power bases.

As will be explored in more detail in later chapters, the iconography used in the coinage of Eirene was picked up on in later numismatic trends. For example, when Theodora became the regent for her son, Michael III, in the ninth century, the *nomismata* practically mirrored that of Eirene and Constantine VI (fig.2.5).[27] However, these are rare coin types, and the exception here was that Thekla – daughter of Theodora and Theophilos, and elder sister to Michael – was also included in early examples of the coin. Like Eirene, Theodora was on the obverse of the *nomismata*, with Thekla and Michael on the reverse. Although Michael is on the right, and thus in the position of honour, it

public contrition on the day of Eirene's imperial procession to return a crown, removed by her husband, to Hagia Sophia: Theophanes, AM 6273, pp.262-7. They reconvened and conspired to take the throne again in 797, after the death of their nephew, and then again in 799, but were thwarted and first banished to Athens, and then later blinded: Theophanes, AM 6290, 6291, pp.650-2.

[27] *DOC III.I*, cat.461-2.

is Thekla who is the larger figure. Similar positioning can also be seen on the coins of the regent Zoe Karbonopsina and her son, Constantine VII.[28]

What is important to pick up on here, is that all of these women – with the exception of Thekla – were regents for their young sons. No other women – again, with the exception of Thekla and her two younger sisters, Anna and Anastasia, on a *nomisma* of Theophilos (fig.2.7) –[29] appear on coinage during this period. All of them also wear the *loros* and hold the cross-topped sceptre, though in some cases it has evolved into both parties holding the patriarchal cross. Thus, through the coinage of Eirene, we see the development of an image that becomes the traditional preserve of powerful women in the middle Byzantine period; Eirene's image is thus successful in displaying herself, and subsequent empresses, as legitimate actors on the imperial stage.

5.2 Sigillographic Evidence

Another first in the reign of Eirene is her appearance on seals. Unlike in numismatic evidence, images of imperial figures had only appeared on seals since around the mid-fifth century.[30] This was also usually limited to men as well; prior to Eirene's seals, an imperial female figure had only been depicted once before, on the seal of Xenon, which stylistically dates from the sixth century (fig.2.8).[31] There are several examples of Eirene's seals extant, mainly

[28] *DOC III.II,* cat.1-2.2. However, on this coin type, Zoe wears the *chlamys* and Constantine wears the *loros*, perhaps indicative of the uneasy balance of power in the 910s after Leo's death.
[29] *DOC III.I,* cat.407.
[30] From the Dumbarton Oaks collection, the earliest identifiable emperor are of Justinian I. *DOS VI,* 4.1 is a clear example of these early types.
[31] The Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection has an example of a seal of 'the imperial Xenon': inv. BZS 1958.106.5394). His named inscription is underneath the imperial couple, with the Virgin Mary between them. Incidentally, this also likely the first image of the Virgin Mary on a seal. The imperial couple are not named but, through stylistic features, we can

bearing her image alone, and a minority bearing the image of Eirene and Constantine VI. There is a seal wherein Constantine VI appears as the sole figure (fig.2.9). It has been suggested that this seal is from the period when Constantine ruled alone (790-2) and Eirene had been quarantined within the palace, but as discussed, this is not well represented in the numismatic evidence.[32] This should indicate the subtle differences between sigillographic and numismatic representations; this was likely for Constantine's correspondence needs, directly from and authorised by him, where it was not necessary to include the image of the empress and only his own.[33]

Within the Dumbarton Oaks collection, there is one seal which holds the joint images of Eirene and Constantine VI on the obverse and the three deceased predecessors on the reverse, mirroring the extant coinage from the beginning of the regency; this seal likely dates from that period.[34] There are then five more seals which hold the sole image of Eirene, titled as *basilissa*; these reflect the iconographical stylings of the numismatic *basilissa* representations of Eirene during her sole reign (fig.2.11b).[35] The number of extant seals for Eirene, as opposed to previous empresses for whom we have practically none, might indicate the influx of duties and avenues for this empress, largely due to her unique position within the Byzantine hierarchy. This is also marked as the beginning of the growing trend of empresses, and high-ranking women more generally, having their images on and making use of

certainly identify them as being from the mid-sixth to early seventh century: Zacos & Veglery, *Seals*, cat.29, suggest Justin II and Sophia, through numismatic comparison.
[32] *DOS VI,* cat.35.1, inv. BZS.1951.31.5.1744.
[33] Perhaps this seal is instead indicative of those turbulent years when they were essentially 'keeping separate courts': Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, p.84. Thus whereas they gave out the image of unified rule to the general public on coins, in more private settings, they pursued different activities.
[34] Zacos & Veglery, *Seals*, cat.275; held in the collection as inv. BZS.1915.31.5.1744.
[35] *DOS VI,* cat.36.1-36.4. *DOS VI,* cat.36.5, holds the image on the reverse too.

seals. Again, Eirene innovated the production of her idealised image within a medium and it was taken on board by successive females in positions of power. Sigillographically and numismatically then, the image of Eirene as sole ruler was reaching different audiences in different contexts but with the same overt message of imperial power and sole authority, as *basilissa*.

As well as on her own seals, the image of Eirene also appears on seals of the *kommerkiarios*; there is an example from the period of her regency and one from her sole reign, which follow the development of the iconography on the coinage of the time too. The first is the seal discussed earlier which holds four male imperial figures and Eirene; the legend on the reverse identifies Anthemios as the *kommerkiarios*, among other titles held (fig.2.10).[36] The second holds a sole image of Eirene on the obverse – though this is assumed from context and stylistic evidence, she is not identified or titled as such – and the legend on the reverse identifies the office of the *kommerkiarios* of Thrace (fig.2.11a).[37] The *kommerkiarios* was the customs official, who was appointed by the imperial court and whose job it was to ensure that all trading through their particular post was appropriately taxed.[38] Thus, the spread of Eirene's image was not only limited to the more exclusive *nomismata* or the less commonly found base metal

---

[36] Zacos & Veglery, *Seals*, cat.275. The full legend is as follows: Ἀνθίμῳ ὑπάτῳ βασιλικῷ ἀσηκρῆτις, γενικῷ κομμερκιαρίῳ καὶ ἄρχοντι τοῦ βλαττίου, 'Anthimos, the *hypatos,* imperial *asekretis,* general *kommerkiarios,* and *archon* of the *blattion*'.

[37] J. Nesbitt & N. Oikonomidès (eds.), *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, Volume I: Italy, North of the Balkans, North of the Black Sea* (Washington D.C., 1991): *DOS I,* cat.71.20*;* inv. BZS.1951.31.5.2778. The full legend is as follows: Τῶν βασιλικῶν κομερκίων τῆς Θρᾴκης, '[Seal of] the imperial *kommerkia* of Thrace': the reading is uncertain and suggested as such by Zacos & Veglery, *Seals,* p.280a, where there is also a second, similar specimen recorded.

[38] A. Dunn, 'The *Kommerkiarios*, the *Apotheke*, the *Dromos*, the *Vardarios*, and the West', *BMGS* 17 (1993), pp.3-24, pp.3-5. There has been some debate about the role of the *kommerkiarios,* largely between Haldon and Oikonomides, in terms of the nature of its role. This discussion is beyond the remit of this thesis however. It is enough to note that officials focusing on the taxation and trade of goods were transacting their business using the image of the empress.

coinage, but would also have been used for trade purposes, likely leading to much more diverse audiences, sealing trade goods passing into and out of the capital and through the empire. This may indicate wide acceptance of Eirene as sole empress though, as an official of the imperial office, the choice in seal imagery was, in all likelihood, not of their own making. While it is more likely to see the image of the emperor on the seals of the *kommerkiarios*, it is tempting to compare this image with the steel-yard weights discussed in Chapter Two. The image of the office of the empress, and also the emperor, as used on seals are expressing the central authority of the state, and directly legitimising the work of the trade official; they thus represent not only the state and authority, but take on the expressions of fair judgment and trading.

5.3 The Trier Ivory

Eirene's image can also potentially be identified within the so-called Trier Ivory (fig.2.13).[39] It has been convincingly argued by successive scholars that this scene depicts a procession and translation of the relics of a saint into Constantinople. The horse and cart to the observer's left carry the remains of a saint in a chest-like reliquary toward the church on the right in the foreground, while people holding candles line the streets and the spaces within the portico. The procession seems to come to a head at the position of the empress; all of the gazes of the frontal figures are directed towards her, including the emperor, who is also gesturing towards her. The empress wears the *chlamys*, holds a cross-topped sceptre, and her elaborate headdress is strikingly similar to the statue head in the Louvre, normally identified as Ariadne, (fig.1.32) and

[39] The Trier Ivory is currently held in the treasury of the Trier Cathedral, Germany.

Theodora's image in San Vitale (fig.1.42). The emperor also looks very similar to the depiction of Justinian in San Vitale (fig.1.41), echoing the stylistic dating of the empress' costume. The costuming therefore gives us a date of after the late fifth to sixth century.[40]

However, the identity of the relics, and of the emperor and empress in the scene, has been a topic of discussion for many years. Traditionally, it has been thought to represent an early Byzantine imperial couple. Spain argued that this scene captured the *adventus* of Herakleios and the relics of the True Cross into Constantinople, welcomed by Martina.[41] There was also a strong argument for Pulcheria and the translation of the bones of St Stephen: Holum and Vikan argued that this was a side of a reliquary – which contained the relics celebrated by the plaque – that reflected the 'characteristic victory ideology' of the Theodosians, but did not hazard a guess at the date of creation.[42] Soon after that article was published, Wortley came to the conclusion that the 'relic-importation' of St Stephen was not a historical event, but a legendary one: though this does necessarily mean that the ivory did not represent this scene, Wortley does argue that this more likely to have been created centuries later, around the eighth century.[43] In her analysis of the Chalke Gate and the image of a mosaic of Christ, which is likely represented in the viewer's top left on the ivory, Brubaker suggests that by close comparison with two other dateable

[40] As seen in numismatic issues after the late 700s, the empress was more likely to be depicted wearing the *loros,* so this may gave us a dateable range for the ivory. However, there are instances of the empress still wearing the *chlamys* – the coins of Zoe Karbonopsina and Constantine VII (fig.2.6) in the early tenth century and Theophano Martinake in the *Menologion* of Basil II (fig.2.19) from the later tenth – so this is certainly not clear cut.
[41] Spain, 'The Translation of Relics Ivory, Trier', *DOP* 33 (1977), pp.13-5.
[42] Holum & Vikan, 'The Trier Ivory', pp.113-33.
[43] Wortley, 'The Trier Ivory Reconsidered', pp.381-94, p.392. He suggests that because this is based on a legendary event, the artist was guided by their 'native imagination' and is thus a 'hotch-potch' of borrowings, which is why scholars have such diverging opinions.

ivories, a date of around the ninth or tenth century can be assigned to the Trier Ivory.[44] Niewöhner argued that the empress must be Eirene of Athens, as she patronised the renovation the church of St Euphemia, which was within the imperial precinct displayed in the ivory, as well as the translation of her relics there.[45] A recent publication by Calahorra posits that the imperial figures are Theodora and Michael III, and that this plaque was intended as an object of propaganda, created following and to reiterate the success of the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843.[46]

As can be seen, the identifications of these two figures and procession spans over five centuries of the Byzantine Empire. Taken out of its context, we cannot know for sure what the plaque is referring to, or even if a Byzantine audience would have made the connection throughout the years – unless explicitly placed within the church, or as part of a specific reliquary as Holum and Vikan first suggested. Nevertheless, the appearance of the icon on the Chalke Gate does point to a vague Middle Byzantine date, and thus this image should be read within that context, and also validates its inclusion in this case study. In a recent article, Chatterjee leaves aside the dating and the identification problems, and instead looks at the overall intention of the ivory; she argues that this plaque displayed the tension over the inclusion of relics and icons, as well as contestation between them, within religious life, and strove to emphasise the 'role of images in Byzantine public ceremonial'.[47] In a

[44] Brubaker, 'The Chalke Gate', pp.258-85. The two ivories in question are the Palazzo Venezia casket (fig.2.17) and the 'Leo sceptre' in Berlin
[45] Niewöhner, 'Trierer Prozessionselfenbein', pp.261-88.
[46] A. Calaharro, 'El marfil de Tréveris: una iconografia clave en el context de la propaganda politico-religiosa del Triunfo de la Ortodoxia', *Erytheia: Revista de Estudios Bizantinos Y Neogriegos* 39 (2018), pp.9-54.
[47] P. Chatterjee, 'Iconoclasm's Legacy: Interpreting the Trier Ivory', *ArtBull* 100.3 (2018), pp.28-47, p.31. She notes that this emphasis on ephemeral items, with their 'distinct categories of holiness' does not necessarily mean the ivory should be dated after

similar approach to Chatterjee, rather than chronologies and personalities, what is important here, for this thesis, is the position of the empress.[48]

With the exception of two craftsmen on the roof of the church and the top lines of people, the gazes of the people are pointed directly at the empress. The positioning and gaze of the emperor is at odds with Byzantine conventions; there are very few examples where the emperor looks towards the empress, rather than frontally. Even the representation of Christ, who when ordinarily appearing alongside imperial portraiture either looks frontally or at the emperor being blessed, appears to be looking down upon her. The empress of the ivory is therefore the focal point of the ivory, not the relics, and certainly not the emperor; the gaze of the audience naturally follows the line of sight of the crowd. The empress stands in front of a church, with its door open and builders actively working on the roof; through these elements, her patronage of the church is implied and being enacted in this scene. With the door open, the implication is that the empress will guide the oncoming imperial procession and *adventus* of the relics into her church. And thus we see several themes of this thesis brought together within this ivory: the pious empress, made even more obvious by the cross-topped sceptre, welcomes the procession to the church that she patronised, positioned in front of the open door, waiting for the translation of the saintly relics. While this ivory may have referred to a specific empress and specific event within its own, now lost, context, what we see represented is the appropriateness of the involvement of the office of the

iconoclasm, as the tensions had been brewing in Byzantine source material for many centuries.

[48] Chatterjee does note the direction of the gazes, but then quickly moves on: Chatterjee, 'Iconoclasm's Legacy', p.36.

empress within this religious, processional scene, and the building of a narrative of her vital and visible presence within its success.

5.4 Textual Representations

Unfortunately, other than the numismatic and sigillographic evidence, we have no extant imagery that can be positively identified as Eirene. As with previous empresses, however, there is textual evidence for physical representations of the empress in Constantinople and her activities within the city, as well as epigraphical remains which indicate her activity outside of the capital. In this next section, Eirene's representation – through actions and image – will be examined.

5.4.1 Statuary

In the *Patria*, a bronze statue of Eirene was recorded as being in the Hippodrome, which was placed there on top of a small column by her son, Constantine.[49] Owing to the fall in statuary production during Late Antiquity, as previously discussed, the claims made by these patriographical works have largely been discredited. Yet we do have evidence for some late statue creation: in the ninth century, Basil I was recorded as having melted down the statue of 'Solomon' – who, according to a different manuscript version in the *Patria,* was positioned to look enviously at Hagia Sophia – to then create a statue in his

[49] *Patria,* 3.202, in an apparent attempt to gain her favour. The use of φιάλην has suggested to others that this column was situated in a basin, or perhaps even a fountain. See W. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls* (Tübingen, 1977) for further discussion.

own image, which he put in the foundations of his church, Nea Ekklesia.[50] If Eirene wished to be seen as the 'New Helena', as will be discussed later in this chapter, perhaps she would have wanted her own likeness in statue form, as we know Helena had hers scattered through the empire.[51] Statues of other earlier imperial women were not uncommon, both in Constantinople and outside of the capital, many of whom were known to have emulated Helena. The only problem with this, of course, was that there is no record of a statue of Constantine VI to complement the set; depictions of Constantine and Helena were almost always presented together.[52]

As we have discussed in other chapters, the *Patria* is unreliable, however, what should be noted here is that this particular piece of information could not have been copied down from the *Parastaseis*; not only does it not appear in this text, but Eirene also reigned after the *Parastaseis* was likely compiled.[53] What this could then suggest was that the authors of the *Patria* added this bit of information themselves, through their own knowledge of the city, specifically the Hippodrome. Berger argues that this was merely another case of mistaken identity, typical of the authors of these works, and that this was in fact an older statue to which the authors had attached Eirene's name.[54] However, as with the statues of Helena, this shows that the authors thought that this was an appropriate place for Eirene to be and, much like Helena, this was in a place of

[50] Mango, *Brazen House*, p.50. Mango gives an overview of the sources, which include Leo the Grammarian, Theodosios Melitenus, and Georgios Hamartolos.
[51] Refer back to chapter one for further discussion on both literary mentions of Helena's statues, as well as several extant statue bases with inscriptions.
[52] There are some exceptions to this rule, as shown by the statue bases in Chapter One: Flavia Iulia Helena.
[53] *Patria,* xvii. It has been suggested that Book III of this compilation must have been written after the reign of Justinian II but before 1000; Berger considered it likely to have been completed in the tenth century, estimated at 989/990, due to the names and details of buildings included.
[54] *Patria*, 3.202, note 204.

political significance and where large groups of people would gather on a regular basis. From around the end of the fifth century onwards, beginning with the acclamation of Anastasios, the Hippodrome certainly became an integral part of the political landscape of the city.[55] Thus, in a similar vein as Helena's statues, Eirene's image was thought appropriate – by a select group, at least – to be in a politically salient location such as the Hippodrome. This should also be noted within the context of the popularity of the text: around sixty manuscripts are still extant and thus may show the 'popular reception' of Constantinople.[56]

5.4.2 Patronage

The *Patria* is a mine of information for Eirene's sites of patronage. The authors of this work assigns four solo ecclesiastical projects to Eirene, and two joint projects, together with Constantine, which all take place in Constantinople.[57] As well as identifying her good works within the profane cityscape, it often labelled Eirene as εὐσεβεστάτη, 'the most pious', sometimes juxtaposed with its negative view of Constantine V to particularly emphasise the chosen qualities of both.[58] Her civic philanthropy is also highlighted by linking her to public foundations.[59] As the *Patria* is evidently predisposed to portray

[55] Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, pp.65-70.
[56] Berger, *Patria*, xviii.
[57] By herself, Eirene patronised the Church of St Euphemia (*Patria* 3.9), the Monastery of Euphrosyne, (*Patria* 3.77), St Loukas, which housed the dead (*Patria* 3.85), and St Eustathios (*Patria* 3.154). Together with Constantine, they patronised the Church of St Anastasios (*Patria* 3.17), and Mother of God at the Spring, likely Pege (*Patria* 3.142).
[58] This is clear in the discussion of the translation of the relics of and restoration of the church of St Euphemia, after Constantine had thrown her bones into the sea and ruined the church: *Patria*, 3.9.
[59] Eirene built homes for old people, hostels, almshouses, as well as reducing the burden of tax (*Patria* 3.85). In an odd chapter, Eirene also built three main buildings: one for death which held the foreigner's cemetery; one for life, which held the 'halls of the Witch (Lamia)

Eirene favourably, there may be some doubts as to the veracity of these claims. There is an inscription in Thessaloniki, however, that indicates her interests and involvement in building programmes. Hagia Sophia, Thessaloniki, bears the monogram of Eirene and monogram of Constantine within the mosaicked apse. The accompanying inscription at the bottom of the mosaic reads: 'Lord, help the master (*despotes*), Constantine', 'Lord, help the lady (*despoina*), Eirene', 'Christ, help Theophilos, the humble bishop'.[60] There are also some recent arguments which link Eirene with the reconstruction of Hagia Eirene, in Constantinople, after an earthquake.[61]

Some of the claims by the *Patria* are also corroborated by other literary sources. Thus, we know that after an earthquake, the Church of the Theotokos at Pege was seriously damaged; it was subsequently restored by Eirene and Constantine.[62] While doing this, Eirene ordered that mosaic portraits of both herself and Constantine should be executed on either side of the church, displaying them as pious rulers in offertory positions. An anonymous tenth-century text, which described the church and its miracles, claimed that these mosaics were executed in response to the miraculous healing of a haemorrhage that Eirene underwent after drinking the water from the spring there.[63] However, the timing of the patronage in this episode is notable. According to

---

and of the bakery; and one for health, which was the *Ta Eirenes* hospital (*Patria* 3.85). Eirene and Constantine are also recorded as having built the palaces of *Ta Eleutheriou* and the accompanying workshops (*Patria*, 3.173).

[60] Translated in Herrin, *Women in Purple*, pl.3 and see p.82.

[61] This is asserted by pulling together the examination of the dendrochronology and revisiting *The Short History* by Nikephoros: P. Magdalino, 'Renaissances d'une capitale: l'urbanisme constantinopolitain des dynasties impériales', *TM* 22 (2018), pp.1-24, pp.19-20.

[62] *Patria* 3.142. See also R. Janin *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin, première partie: Le siége de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique, 3, Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1969, 2nd ed.), p.233.

[63] *De sacris aedibus Deiparae ad Fontem, ASS,* Nov. III 880BC; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), pp.156-7: *Fontem*, 880. Herrin links this suspected gynaecological problem with Eirene's lack of children, other than Constantine: Herrin, *Women in Purple,* pp.73-4.

Theophanes, soon after the earthquake was a tense time in the imperial court; Constantine had reached his majority and wished to rule by himself, and Eirene was roused by one of her eunuch officials, Staurakios, against him, consequently having her son flogged and his followers punished too.[64] The next year led to her removal from power. Perhaps such ostentatious displays of their partnered rule were meant to remind those journeying to the Church of the Theotokos at Pege that this rule was indeed a joint one, as well as a pious one.

Additionally, fragments of a lost chronicle, the extant text of which covered the years from 811 to 820, described that when Leo V reinstituted iconoclasm for the second time, he took down the icon of the Chalke Gate.[65] Above this icon read the inscription 'This which aforetime the Emperor Leo took down, Irene has restored here" – the reigning Leo was thought to be emulating Leo III and wished for a reign as long as his had lasted.[66] Regardless of the veracity of this incident, and her involvement with the icon is also recorded by the *Patria*, what can be suggested from this chronicle is that Eirene was clearly being linked by contemporaries – such as Theophanes – and those writing slightly later – such as Skylitzes – to the restoration of icons and for righting previous unorthodoxies.[67] As argued by Brubaker, while the historicity of this event is questionable, certainly by the tenth century, Eirene was clearly linked

[64] Theophanes, AM 6282, pp.638-9. Another reading of this chapter might be that, rather than being an actual earthquake, Theophanes interpolated an earthquake in this section to act as an omen for the troubles to come.
[65] *Scriptor incertus de Leone Armenio,* ed. I. Bekker, in the edition of *Leo Grammatikos*, CSHB 31 (Bonn, 1842), pp.335 ff; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), pp.157: *Leone,* 354-355. This is also recorded in the *Patria*: *Patria*, 3.20. The icon of the Chalke Gate has been much discussed; see Brubaker & Haldon, *Iconoclast Era: The Sources*, p.71, for further discussion.
[66] *Leone,* 354-355.
[67] The *Patria* also claims that Eirene placed the mosaic image of Christ on the Chalke Gate, which was responsible for healing miracles, particularly noting the healing of the woman with the issue of blood: *Patria* 3.20. This is a common trope which stems from a miracle of Christ (Luke 8:43-8).

with the restoration of icons and, in particular, the Christ icon on the Chalke Gate.[68]

5.4.3 Omission of Eirene?

Thus, from text-based evidence, we can discern that Eirene had her image placed, and was placed for her, within the capital. We also see her very visible presence in the mundane and profane cityscape through her patronage, as well as her reputation for the continued presence of icons, particularly on the Chalke Gate. She had entered the collective memory of the city as a political force and as patroness and promoter of Orthodox Christianity. Therefore, one place where it is quite surprising that we do not find her represented is the *Menologion* of Basil II.

The *Menologion* was a calendar of saints' feast days – a historical *synaxarion* – that was probably created under the auspices of Basil II, as can determined from the introductory 'poem' and therefore leads us to date this between 976-1025.[69] Of interest to this study is folio 108, where there is a miniature of the Second Council of Nikaia, the only ecumenical council scene explicitly laid out over the 430 illuminated leaves of the manuscript (fig.2.12).[70] In Theophanes' work, it seems to be chiefly the work of Eirene that iconoclasm was overturned during this assembly, yet in this illumination only Constantine VI appears, as the clear sole emperor, surrounded by the clergy.[71] Does this

[68] Brubaker, 'The Chalke Gate', pp.280-1.
[69] I. Ševčenko, 'The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II', *DOP* 16 (1962), pp.245-76 p.245.
[70] *BAV,* Vat.gr.1613, fol.108. None of the figures are labelled within the miniature.
[71] Theophanes, AM 6279-80, pp.635-7. Theophanes also gives Eirene credit for the manoeuvrings beforehand, which allowed her to push this through.

then suggest that by the reign of Basil, Eirene's role in this event had been significantly altered, perhaps even actively removed?

Yet, as we can see from Skylitzes' *Synopsis*, written in the mid- to late eleventh century, Eirene was recorded as chiefly responsible for the end of iconoclasm.[72] However, there is evidence to suggest that Skylitzes was carrying on from Theophanes the Confessor's work, who he claimed to be one of the best historical writers. *Synopsis* may then be a continuation of Theophanes' positive treatment of Eirene, which may have differed from the general consensus on Eirene's deeds, or lack thereof.[73] Yet, the hagiography concerning Nikephoros, the Patriarch in Constantinople during the reign of Eirene, also sings her praises as the possessor 'of the love of God and firmness of understanding' regarding icons, and then explicitly identifies Eirene as the architect of the successful assembly.[74] Written in the 840s, this hagiography was, again, certainly known in the tenth century, with Nikephoros becoming a popular figure for the defence of icons.[75] A hagiography was produced about Eirene in the mid-ninth century, and she appeared in the Constantinopolitan *synaxarion*.[76] Her association with the mosaic on the Chalke Gate by the tenth century has already been discussed.

---

[72] John Skylitzes, Σύνοψις Ἱστοριῶν, ed. H. Thurn, CFHB 5 (Berlin & New York, NY, 1973), trans. J. Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057* (Cambridge, 2010): Skylitzes, 2.2, p.16.
[73] Skylitzes, foreword, pp.1-3.
[74] This is with the proviso that she did so against her own limitations as a 'mere woman': Ignatios the Deacon, *Life of St Nikephoros*, BHG 1335, ed. C. de Boor, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opuscula historica* (Leipzig, 1880; repr. New York. NY, 1975), pp.139-217; trans. E. A. Fisher, 'Life of the Patriarch Nikephoros I of Constantinople', in A.-M. Talbot (ed.), *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Washington D.C., 1998), pp.25-142: *VNike.,* pp.48-9.
[75] Several manuscripts survive, three of which were dated to the tenth century: *VNike.*, pp.35-6.
[76] *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. H. Delehaye, Propylaeum ad ASS Nov., (Brussels, 1902): *Synax.CP.,* col. 871-2. For the hagiography, see W. Treadgold, 'The Unpublished Saint's Life of the Empress Irene (BHG 2205)', *ByzForsch* 8 (1982), pp.237-51.

So, Eirene was known for her involvement in the restoration of icons and as the force behind the Second Council of Nikaia. It is unclear as to whether she was excluded from this event based on her gender alone; as it is, we see an illumination of and accompanying text of Theodora (830-855), who dissolved iconoclasm for the second time in 843, and thus was depicted carrying an icon of Christ (fig.2.18).[77] There is also a miniature and accompanying text of Theophano Martiniake (886-893) (fig.2.19), the portraiture of both clearly labelling them as empresses.[78] So, there were recent empresses as saints within the manuscript.

Putting aside the many images of the martyrdoms of early saints, which does include a series of female martyrs, and scenes from the lives of Christ and the Virgin Mary, a peculiar pattern begins to appear. On examining the *Menologion*, I was unable to find the presence of saintly empresses from the early period of Byzantium, even Helena or Pulcheria. For instance, in the illumination of the translation of the relics of St John Chrysostom, only Emperor Theodosios II appears at the head of the procession.[79] While the association of Pulcheria with the Constantinopolitan shrines of the Theotokos is problematic for present-day academics, Zeno, and not Pulcheria, was linked to Blachernai in the text.[80] In fact, whereas we are aware that empresses took part

[77] *BAV,* Vat.gr.1613, fol.249.
[78] *BAV,* Vat.gr.1613, fol.392. Whereas Theodora wears the *loros* with *thorakion*, Theophano wears the *chlamys*, but both wear pinnacled crowns.
[79] *BAV,* Vat.gr.1613, fol.353. While it could be argued that the antagonism between John Chrysostom and those who occupied the office of empress may have prevented the artisans from representing an empress, this seems unlikely. His relics were translated to Constantinople in 438, when Pulcheria was a visible player in the imperial court and known for her involvement with relics (also true of Eudokia).
[80] L. James, 'The Empress and the Virgin in Early Byzantium: Piety, Authority and Devotion', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Farnham, 2005, repr. Abingdon, 2017), pp.145-52, p.147. These structures are Blachernai, Chalkoprateia and Hodegon. The association of Pulcheria is a late one, but it is odd that these buildings are linked with an emperor instead of one of the fifth- or sixth-century empresses (often with their husbands), as is usual in the source material. Helena

in processions and translations of relics, sometimes in pivotal roles as presented in the Trier Ivory or Helena's legendary role in the translation of the True Cross, none of the representations of these religious undertakings includes any empresses, and only one includes a woman.[81] Thus, rather than include the earlier iterations, the images of more recent imperial female saints were included; those saintly empresses who were linked with the beginnings of the Macedonian dynasty, and perhaps then emphasised the piety of this dynasty.

What must also be taken into account is the intended audience of this manuscript and its illuminations. As a richly decorated item – the manuscript has 432 illuminations, all of which make use of gold leaf – the audience for this work would have been a small and an elite one. I would argue that this omission was likely purposeful and might enter into the realms of a 'visual polemic', as coined by Corrigan:[82] the intended audience would have been aware of Eirene's omission, as well as other empresses. This action (or inaction) links into the omission of empresses in the literary sources: their silences are purposeful, their exclusions a comment on their views of the women omitted. Those who were included, therefore, also gained special significance, through their inclusion.

(along with Constantine, *Synax.CP.,* col.697) and Pulcheria are recorded in the tenth-century *synaxarion* of Constantinople: Pulcheria was noted as a patron of churches in her entry: *Synax.CP.*, col.866.

[81] There are eight translations of relics (fol.204, 306, 341, 353, 355, 391 and 406), some of which are situated next to the violence of their martyrdom pictorially, and three processions (fol.35, 142, & 350) illuminated in the manuscript. Two of these place the emperor in the activity (fol.353 & 350). Folio 420 explicitly shows an emperor attending the unearthing of a saint's relics, with accompanying procession.

[82] See K. Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth Century Byzantine Psalters* (Cambridge, 1992).

Conclusion

Overall, the representations of Eirene highlight a change in the way empresses were depicted in the Middle Byzantine period, through specific regalia, and in the resurgence of female imagery on coins. However, the image of Eirene, both physically and literally, suffers through omissions and through her actions within the public sphere, although no other empress was able to rule for such a long period of time. Her image is at once both unique due to her circumstances – no other empress has a double-sided coin, for instance – but also becomes the norm for empresses of the Middle Byzantine period. While we cannot know if she is represented in the Trier Ivory, it clearly displays, through the focus on the empress, the role that the office of the empress could take and successfully fulfil in religious ceremony, as well as the expectation of and association with ecclesiastical patronage.

What we also see during the tenure of Eirene are elements of competitive agency. Due to her unusual circumstances, internal – political and religious – and, potentially, external rival power bases loomed large. This may be why Eirene took such an active role in the patronage of many ecclesiastic and civic sites within Constantinople, to buoy her popularity in the capital, and to showcase her piety and the appropriateness of her reign as empress. Together with her images, this constructed a narrative that served to legitimise and cement her central role as *basilissa* to the public, and to her opponents.

Chapter Six: Eudokia Ingerina

Eudokia, born c. 840, was at the imperial court during the time of both Michael III (842-867) and Basil I (867-886). Rumoured to have been Michael's mistress, she later married Basil in 865 and together had at least three sons and three daughters.[1] Whereas their sons made politically sound marriages, their daughters were sent to monasteries.[2] There are mentions of Eudokia's involvement in the organisation of a bride-show for Leo VI (886-912), and her pivotal role in selecting Theophano.[3] Apart from this episode, unfortunately, there are little more than passing references to Eudokia in the sources after her initial entry into imperial circles, marriage to Basil, and the subsequent birth of her children. She died soon after Leo's first marriage, in 882, probably in her early forties, and was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles.

Her own background is certainly of some interest; her family name, Ingerina, was unusual and thus has been the subject of debate. Mango has argued convincingly, in its various forms – Ἰγγερίνα, Ἰγγηρίνα, Ἰγκηρος or ἡ του

[1] A daughter, Anastasia, and another son, Constantine, were Basil's children, but could have been from his first marriage to a woman named Maria. See C. Mango, 'Eudocia Ingerina, the Normans, and the Macedonian Dynasty', *ZRVI* XIV-XV (1973), pp.17-27, pp.21-4, for discussion on the couple's children, and Eudokia's background and relationship with Michael III.

[2] Constantine was betrothed to the daughter of Louis II of Italy and Leo was married to a not too distant relative, Theophano Martiniake. Mango, 'Eudokia Ingerina', p.27, has suggested that this relation was on Eudokia's paternal side. Tougher, *Leo VI*, p.31, suggests that the daughters were placed in a nunnery as Basil did not want any potential son-in-laws challenging his sons for imperial power.

[3] There is a myriad of secondary literature on Byzantine bride shows, with discussions around their existence, frequency, and how the process worked. Five were recorded in contemporary sources in the Middle Byzantine period, though Garland has suggested that Eirene's sudden appearance in the court was also down to a bride show, potentially bringing the number up to six: Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, p.73. See L. Rydén, 'The Bride-Shows at the Byzantine Court: History or Fiction?', *Eranos: Acta Philologica Suecana* 83 (1985), pp.175-91; W. Treadgold, 'The Historicity of Imperial Bride-Shows', *JÖB* 54 (2004), pp.39-52; M. Vinson, 'Romance and Reality in Byzantine Bride Shows', in L. Brubaker & J. M. Smith (eds.), *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900* (Cambridge, 2004), pp.102-20.

Ιγγερος, 'daughter of Inger' – that the name is Scandinavian in origin.[4] It was likely, however, that Eudokia was from a family of good standing to have been in such close contact with the emperor, and then become the wife of the co-emperor. Another suggestion is that she was the daughter of one of the Varangian guards, and so was introduced to the imperial court through proximity, rather than familial status.[5]

Although there were other imperial women represented in the ninth century – such as Theodora, Thekla, and Eudokia Baiane –[6] appearances of Eudokia are more numerous, contemporaneous with her rule and can provide a greater understanding of messages about the position of empresses in this period. I will first explore her appearances in contemporaneous texts, as these are polarising in her representation; the rumours of sexual misconduct that surrounded Eudokia, Basil I, and Michael III may have affected the way in which she was represented. Through her depictions – on a miniature, ivory, coins, and a no-longer extant mosaic – the positioning and the portraiture of

[4] There is only one recorded mention of an Inger, which can be found in the *Life of Ioannikios*, who was the iconoclast metropolitan of Nikaia in c.825. This Inger is described as first repenting from his heretical ways on the advice of the saint and then, when he reverted to an iconoclast position, died fifteen days later. Mango argues that it is unlikely this man was Eudokia's father due to the problematic chronology, but if a member of the Rus was present at the imperial court, this may have been why the Rus embassy was well received in 839; they had found a 'kinsman' there which helped to smooth over any initial problems: Mango, 'Eudocia Ingerina', p.18.

[5] This would suggest, however, that the creation of the Varangian guard was a century earlier than is thought. See G. Theotokis, 'Rus, Varangian, and Frankish Mercenaries in the Service of the Byzantine Emperors (9th-11th centuries)', *BS* 22 (2012), pp.125-56, especially pp.128-130, which provides an overview of the Varangians and source materials.

[6] Theodora and Thekla, her daughter, were portrayed numismatically during the tenure of Michael III, their son and brother, respectively. Both appear in miniatures within the twelfth-century Madrid manuscript of Skylitzes, and Theodora was also portrayed as a saint in the illuminated manuscript of the *Menologion* of Basil II (fig.2.18). While there has been much discussion surrounding the identity of the saint-empress depicted in the inlaid marble plaque from the church of Constantine Lips (fig.2.20), Gerstel has convincingly argued it as Eudokia Baiana, third wife of Leo VI: S. J. E. Gerstel, 'Saint Eudokia and the Imperial Household of Leo VI', *ArtBull*, 79.4 (1997), pp.699-707. I have included Eudokia Baiana in this case study because there was some suggestion that the plaque could represent Eudokia Ingerina.

ninth-century empresses can be examined. She is also part of the trend in Middle Byzantium, started in the regency of Eirene, of mothers being depicted explicitly with the heirs to the imperial dignity, which will also be explored during this case study.[7]

6.1 Source Problems

The sources of this period are somewhat confused; there has been much discussion on who authored which text, especially in reference to Symeon the Logothete.[8] What is clear however, is that these texts usually take strong stances: they are either positive about the 'Macedonian house' – though these can vary on how they view Basil I, Leo VI and Constantine VII – or much less enthused, usually with Basil as their focal point.[9] These tend to attack the integrity of Eudokia's marriage, bringing the legitimacy of her sons – up until Alexander, who was born after Michael's death – into question, which has especially resonated within present-day scholarship.[10] The Logothete described

[7] Though mothers have been associated with their children previously and, for example, the security of the empire (see Chapter One: Flavia Iulia Helena), there seems to be a shift in this century toward depictions of mothers and sons shown together, a theme which will be explored throughout this section.

[8] This author has a corpus of works that have been attributed to different names, but recent scholarship tends to group them under the aegis of one main author. The past names are as follows: Symeon the Logothete, Leo Grammatikos, Symeon the Metaphraste, Pseudo-Julius Pollox and Theophanes Continuatus. The recent translation by Staffan Wahlgren has attempted to shed some light on this: S. Wahlgren, *The Chronicle of the Logothete* (Liverpool, 2019), pp.3-8.

[9] 'Pro-Macedonian' sources are usually categorised as John Skylitzes and Theophanes Continuatus, especially *Vita Basilii*, whereas Symeon the Logothete and the various associated pseudonyms, and later sources (such as Zonaras III, 16. 15-19) that are linked with this writer are usually more negatively focused against the Macedonians.

[10] The details given by the sources on the relationship between Michael and Basil, and how Eudokia may have been 'shared' between the two has fuelled the imagination of many academics. Mango, 'Eudocia Ingerina', p.22, even goes so far as to label it as a *ménage a trois*. Jenkins suggests that Michael was actually a homosexual which would, he says, explain Basil's sudden and inexplicable rise to success, Michael's lack of children, and suggests that Eudokia was a disguise used by the sources to cover up Michael's proclivities: R. J. H. Jenkins, *Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries, AD 610-1071* (London, 1966; repr. Toronto, 2001), p.198. This relationship has also been discussed in M. Mullett, 'Byzantium:

Eudokia as being in a relationship with Michael, though Michael's mother, Theodora, disapproved of the 'impudent' woman and her iconoclast family, and Michael was thus married off to Eudokia Dekapolitissa.[11] We do not hear of her again until Basil's power struggle with Caesar Bardas, ultimately leading to Bardas' murder by Basil, during which time Michael had Basil divorce his wife, Maria, and marry Eudokia.[12] According to these sources, there was a deal made, in which Basil would marry Eudokia and treat her as his 'lady' but never have sexual relations with her, so that Michael could continue with her as his mistress; Basil was awarded Thekla, the older sister of Michael, who had been living in a monastery up to this point, as recompense.[13]

That Eudokia may have been wife in name only to Basil, and lover to Michael was, of course, not mentioned in the pro-Macedonian sources. She was instead introduced to Basil at court and then married to him around the same time as he became emperor, soon after giving birth to Leo.[14] Some have pointed to Leo and Basil's less than amicable relationship as proof that Basil knew Leo was not his biological son.[15] As Tougher has argued, it was not just Leo who was under suspicion of being fathered by Michael instead of Basil, yet his

---

A Friendly Society?', *Past and Present* 118 (1988), pp.3-24, particularly pp.10-11 for indicators of homoeroticism in contemporary materials. P. Karlin-Hayter, 'L'enjeu d'une rumeur. Opinion et imaginaire à Byzance au IXe siècle', *JÖB* 41 (1994), pp.85-111, particularly pp.88-9, underlined the negative portrayal of the emperors and argued that the connotations of homosexuality were placed there purposefully to further blacken their characters. S. Tougher, 'Michael III and Basil the Macedonian: Just Good Friends?', in L. James (ed.), *Desire and Denial in Byzantium: Papers from the 31st Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Brighton, March 1997*, SPBS 6 (Aldershot, 1999), pp.149-60, pp.149-58, who largely outlines the sources' mentions of homosexual tendencies as critiques rather than truth.

[11] Leo Grammatikos, Χρονογραφία τά τών νέων Βασιλέων περιέχονσα, ed. I. Bekker, *Leonis Grammatici Chronographia,* CSHB 31 (Bonn, 1842): *Leo Gram.*, 229-30; part. trans. Mango, 'Eudocia Ingerina', p.18.

[12] *Leo Gram.,* 242-9; Tougher, *Leo VI*, pp.43-4.

[13] *Leo Gram.,* 242; Mango, 'Eudocia Ingerina', pp.21-2.

[14] Skylitzes, 6.11, p.127.

[15] Mango, 'Eudocia Ingerina', pp.25-6.

relationship with other children was not noted for its animosity.[16] The actions of Leo VI directly after the death of Basil have also been noted as telling; he reinterred Michael in the Church of the Holy Apostles with full burial honours.[17] The monody by Leo for Basil has been argued as completely insincere, a 'string of lies and half-truths', which, for those who argue for the illegitimacy of Leo, can be taken as further testament to the sour relationship between Leo and Basil.[18]

What is more important for the interests of this study than the paternity of Leo VI, and thus the Amorian or Macedonian heritage of the later emperors, is how Eudokia was used by the sources to criticise Michael and Basil. If there were contemporary rumours about the paternity of their children, this may have impacted on Eudokia's representations; as both empress and mother, in an attempt to quell the rumours and ensure the continued legitimacy and acceptability of imperial rule.

6.2 Numismatic Evidence

In the early Byzantine period, there were significant gaps where empresses did not appear on coins, but trends and continuities can still be observed over the whole of the period, as has already been examined. The ninth century does not have such long gaps: Eirene, whose reign ended in 802, was followed by Theodora and Thekla on Michael's early coinage, during the regency

[16] Tougher, *Leo VI*, p.45. Stephen (who later became the patriarch of Constantinople, 886-93) has also been suggested as a potential child of Michael as, according to some sources, the affair of Eudokia and Michael carried on for some time after Basil and Eudokia's 'nominal' marriage.
[17] Theophanes Continuatus, Χρονογραφία, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB 45 (Bonn, 1838): Theo. Cont., 353.
[18] Mango, 'Eudocia Ingerina', p.25.

period (fig.2.5), which subsequently gave way to Eudokia's numismatic portrayal.[19] While we have seen that it was not unusual for the regent to appear on the coinage of the young emperor, it was most unusual for Thekla, the sister of the emperor, to appear alongside him.[20] What is interesting about the numismatic evidence of this period is that the only female figures that tend to appear on them were the regents of the young emperors. That Eudokia appeared on the coinage of Basil I was certainly significant; she was the only female figure who had appeared in her position as the *augusta* as wife of the emperor, as opposed to the regent or sole ruler since the 600s.[21] Thus, in the ninth century, we see a broadening of images on coins, following the example and iconographical style of Eirene, and rooted in earlier traditions.

Eudokia's image appeared on a small number of gold issues alongside Basil and Constantine (fig.2.14).[22] She appeared on the reverse with Constantine, with the obverse bearing the image of Basil: though she is larger in size than Constantine, she was in the position of lesser honour – as well as being on the reverse – yet, Constantine's junior status is further underlined by the difference in costume – both Eudokia and Basil are in the *loros*, whilst Constantine was in the *chlamys*. Eudokia carried the Christian regalia that had

[19] For these early regency coins, see *DOC III.I,* cat.1a.1-1f. Theodora also appeared rarely on Theophilos' *nomismata*.
[20] The only other sister of the Eastern Roman emperor to appear on coins minted during their reign was Pulcheria who, arguably, acted in a regency capacity and was proclaimed *augusta*. See Chapter Two: Aelia Ariadne for discussion on Pulcheria.
[21] For numismatic representations of Eudokia Ingerina, see *DOC III.II*, cat.3.1-4. For discussion about the problems of Constantine's parentage and whether this is reflected on the coinage, see *DOC III.II*, p.474.
[22] Constantine was the eldest of the imperial children. There has been much discussion as to whose child he was – he was either Basil's from his first marriage to a certain Maria, or he was Eudokia's child and therefore modern scholarship has quibbled over whether Michael or Basil was his father. Mango, 'Eudocia Ingerina', p.21, takes the opinion that Constantine must be Basil and Maria's son (Constantine was old enough to go on campaign with Basil in 877), but Grierson is much more dubious: *DOC III.II,* p.474. Tougher has also assessed the likelihood of Constantine's parentage: Tougher, *Leo VI*, pp.42-4.

developed from the late fourth century: the cross-topped sceptre and diadem, though it was Constantine who held the *globus cruciger*. Thus, the image of Eudokia continued to hold these traditional symbols of piety, as well as being in agreement with the positioning, expected through convention, of the empress.

Constantine was crowned co-emperor quickly after Basil's accession to the throne in 867. Regardless of his parentage, as the eldest son of the family, he was the heir apparent, thus explaining his appearance on the reverse of the coin, though the positioning with Eudokia has been questioned. There may be precedent for the second wife to appear on the coin with her step-son; that of Herakleios and Martina. [23] Yet, this is not the point: numismatic issues focus on how the imperial regime wanted to be perceived, rather than the reality of the situation. Thus Eudokia is placed in the role of the imperial mother, and Constantine in the son and heir position. This had become traditional during the tenure of the Isaurians and Theophilios, which also included being shown with immediate female relatives. I would argue that even if Constantine was not the son of Eudokia, their appearance together on the reverse of this coin type suggested that the imperial machine wished for the perception, irrespective of biology, to be that of a legitimate, pious, imperial family.

These coins are rare and show a lack of wear, indicating that they were commemorative issues. As both Constantine and Eudokia had died (879 and 882 respectively), Grierson favours the view that these coins were memorial issues – this thesis has already discussed the comparable deceased images on Isaurian coinage.[24] However, the posthumous portraits were normally issued by

[23] It has been argued that it would be very unlikely for Eudokia to appear on the coin if she was not the mother of Constantine: *DOC III.II*, p.474.
[24] *DOC III.II*, p.481. Grierson, following Ostrogorsky, argues that Constantine was Basil's favourite child and fell into a deep depression when he died; his other sons were shown

successive emperors, to showcase their own legitimacy. It is more likely that the Eudokia coins were issued on their accession; a political display of familial unity, piety, and traditional signifiers of imperial power, potentially quelling any disquiet about their melded family or their suitability to ascend the throne. An earlier date is preferable too, as Leo was not shown on this type, whereas he, Constantine and Basil did appear on other issues together. Eudokia, however, does not make another appearance numismatically.

6.3 Miniatures

Eudokia was also depicted on the illuminated manuscript of Paris.gr.510 (fig.2.15), which contained the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos. Her illumination is part of a series at the front of the manuscript, which includes an image of Christ enthroned, two images of the stepped Cross which bears the legend ICXC NIKA, and Basil flanked by Elijah to his right, and Gabriel to his left (fig.2.16).[25] Eudokia is flanked by her two sons, Leo on her right and Alexander on her left.[26] All are nimbate, holding a globe in their left hands, and dressed in the *loros*, by this point a clearly full-body *loros*, which wraps around the right-hand side. The two junior emperors are wearing simple diadems, whereas Eudokia's has the pinnacles associated with the empress' crown,

---

little favour and only appeared on fractional coinage. There is arguably also a tradition of commemoration in the reign of Theophilos, who mourned his son, Constantine, on his coinage, portrayed with himself and his second son, Michael.

[25] Paris.gr.510 fol.Av, Bv & Cr, and Cv respectively.

[26] Paris.gr.510 fol.Br. For works on this manuscript and imperial images, see L. Brubaker, 'To Legitimise an Emperor: Constantine and Visual Authority in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries', in P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries: Papers from the Twenty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992*, SPBS 2 (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 139-58; Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, particularly pp.147-200; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, pp.192-204.

mirroring her numismatic representations.[27] Eudokia also holds a sceptre in her right hand, though surprisingly this is not a cross-topped sceptre as was the norm for contemporary female imagery. This is the first time in which an empress was dressed in the same regalia, the *loros*, as the junior emperor.[28] Although heavily damaged, the *loros* worn by the figures on this folio are the same as Basil's costume.[29] This demonstrates a clear link between the four figures as members of the same imperial status, though they are, perhaps, not entirely equal, as shown by the size and positioning of the figures, and the exalted company that Basil keeps.[30]

Unfortunately, Eudokia's face is badly damaged, but the gaze of her sons can also convey a subtle message: Leo, as well as being in the favoured position on the right of the empress, has a direct, forward-facing gaze, whereas Alexander is looking toward his mother, signalling his inferior position in the imperial hierarchy. Leo is labelled as *despotes*, whereas *adelphos* labels Alexander; Eudokia is the *augusta*. As Constantine does not appear, this manuscript must have been created after 879, and thus when Alexander had been crowned, and so this illumination reflects the new order within the

[27] See numismatic iconography of Eirene, Theodora, Thekla and Zoe Karbonopsina (fig.2.3a-b, 4, 5, 6). It is unclear as to whether she was depicted with *pendilia*, due to the damage on the illumination, but this is surely likely. There is also no cross in the middle of her crown as is the norm.
[28] Compare with the regency coinage of Eirene and Constantine VI (fig.2.3a-b), and Theodora and Michael III (fig.2.5).
[29] There is a minor difference with Eudokia's, in that the drape over the arm is bigger and starts earlier across the body. This image has been shown to be part of the evolution of the scarf-like *loros* into the so-called 'thorakion', that develops over the ninth and into the eleventh century: Gerstel, 'Saint Eudokia', p.704.
[30] It has been proven that these folia were actually in a different order than how they are found today: Basil would have been further forward in the order than his wife and sons, to further illustrate his superiority as emperor. See I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976), pp.96-9; Brubaker, 'To Legitimise an Emperor', pp.139-45, for further discussion on this.

imperial family: the now eldest Leo, although dressed similarly to his mother and brother, is subtly elevated above his sibling by title, gaze, and position.[31]

The border of the miniature is filled with an accompanying text, which closely associates Eudokia with Basil and the continuation of the dynasty: 'Basil, emperor of the Romans, precedes you, the well-branched vineyard bearing the grapes of the empire, the gentle *despotes*. With them you shine forth, light-bearing Eudokia'.[32] Women had long being associated with 'flowering' metaphors, converging the abundance of nature and female fecundity, which had in the past been linked with Venus and Ceres.[33] This is also a trope used in throughout the Old Testament.[34] Brubaker has also pointed out that the images, read alongside the figure of Christ, suggest that this was a blessing of the partnership of Basil and Eudokia, and of their production of a new dynasty, symbolised by Leo and Alexander.[35] This is reinforced by the text on Christ's book, 'My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you' (John 14:27), which appeared on wedding rings, symbolising martial harmony through Christ.[36]

According to Dagron, the miniatures also showcase Basil's continuous association in his reign with key Old Testament figures such as Elijah; while

---

[31] Dagron also suggests that one folio (Bv) is a palimpsest; the coronation scene of a male figure that can be seen beneath the cross may have represented Constantine. On his death, the scribe no longer thought it appropriate to represent him and replaced his figure with a cross: Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, p.194.
[32] Translation given in Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, p.162.
[33] Angelova gives examples of 'flowering' comparisons with Maria, wife of Honorius, her mother, Serena, and Sophia, of the sixth century: Angelova, *Sacred Founders*, p.239. This type of description comes into use to describe empresses more often in the following years. Angelova also points out that 'nuances of flowering and protection' come to be used when describing the Virgin Mary from the sixth century.
[34] Examples include Numbers 20.5; Deutromony 8:7-8; Isaiah 5:1-2; Joel 2:22; Haggai 2:19; Zachariah 8:12; Psalm 128:3. These sections also refer to pomegranates, which are carried in the ceremony of the empress in the *Book of Ceremonies*: *BOC I*, R204-14.
[35] Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, pp.150-1
[36] Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, p.150; Vikan, 'Art and Marriage', p.161.

Gabriel offers the crown, a sign of divine favour, Elijah offers the *labarum*, signifying 'Constantinian victory', mirrored in the framing text.[37] This was amplified by the cross, which signalled 'God-given imperial triumph' and was associated with the victory of Constantine.[38] In this context, we should read Eudokia's image similarly; through their holding of globes, the empress and sons represent the continuation of imperial victory through their familial line. Thus, the traditional image of the empress associated with imperial victory is once again seen.

6.4 The Palazzo Casket Ivory

A potential image of Eudokia is also found on the Palazzo casket ivory, on the top panel (fig.2.17). This panel is divided into three sections: the bottom section contains a couple in attitudes of obeisance, while the middle portrays Christ blessing the emperor, to his right, and the empress, to his left. The top section of the panel holds an inscription which reads, 'The couple of servants adore, as they should, the imperial couple, which is blessed by Christ'; the amended and broken inscription around the rim reads 'Your soul is a treasure chest of gifts from lofty emperors. It is a vessel of imperial riches. Furthermore, your body, O Empress… is a treasure chest of foreign assets, for such a great husband'.[39] The side panels then depict a variety of Old Testament scenes,

[37] Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, pp.196-7. The text reads 'Elijah promises victory over [Basil's] enemies. But Gabriel, having predicted joy, crowns you, Basil, governor of the cosmos': translation given in Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, p.158.
[38] Paris.gr.510, fol. Bv & Cr. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, p.153.
[39] The first translation is in Gerstel, 'Saint Eudokia', p.703, note 39. The second translation given is in H. Maguire, 'The Art of Comparing in Byzantium', *ArtBull* 70.1 (1988), pp.89-93, p.89. Maguire notes that this second inscription is difficult to read because of later restoration efforts, but the inscription, as it stands in its florid style, is 'characteristic of Byzantine panegyrics'.

focused on the life of David, notably including the famous scene of the slaying of Goliath and the anointing of David.

Similarly to the Trier Ivory, the identity of this imperial couple has also been debated, but, based on stylistic elements – particularly the imperial costuming of the couple, but also the technique of the carved lettering – this ivory has been quite securely dated to the late ninth or early tenth century.[40] While Maguire, Kalavrezou and Brubaker have identified the couple as Basil I and Eudokia, Cutler, Oikonomidès and Gerstel have claimed that it is Leo VI and Eudokia Baiana.[41] This ivory casket has been read as a wedding gift to an imperial couple; for the latter group of scholars, it signifies the celebration of Leo VI on his third marriage to Eudokia. The image of Christ blessing the emperor and empress in this layout is characteristic of those earlier commemorative coins produced for the unions of imperial couples, and would likely have been recognised as such by Byzantine audiences too. Due to a different reading of the inscription, the casket has also been seen as model of the imperial couple's piety: Maguire argues that both sections represent Basil and Eudokia – reflecting their imperial role in the middle section, and their humility before Christ in the bottom.[42] The casket as a gift seems more convincing, however; I am not aware of representations of ruling emperors in either non-imperial or non-military costume until the Palaiologan period. The

[40] For Gerstel, this is the next stage in the development of the loros into the 'thorakion', on from Eudokia's representation in the miniature of Paris.gr.510: Gerstel, 'Saint Eudokia', p.704. For the lettering, see A. Cutler & N. Oikonomidès, 'An Imperial Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hands', *ArtBull* 70.1 (1988), pp.77-87.
[41] For Eudokia and Basil I: Maguire, 'The Art of Comparing', pp.89-93; I. Kalavrezou, 'A New Type of Icon: Ivories and Steatites', in A. Markopoulos (ed.), *Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and His Age: Second International Byzantine Conference, Delphi, July 22-26, 1987* (Athens, 1989), pp.377-96; Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, pp.159, 185-6. For Leo VI and Eudokia Baiana: Cutler & Oikonomidès, 'An Imperial Casket', pp.77-87; Gerstel, 'Saint Eudocia', pp.702-4.
[42] Maguire, 'The Art of Comparing', p.91.

positioning of the figures within the casket is also more consistent with donor portraiture.

In terms of identity, the appearance of Davidic iconography is characteristic of Basil's reign; Maguire notes the similarities between David and Basil's rise to power.[43] As convincingly pointed out by Brubaker, this clearly reflects the imagery and messaging contained within the Paris.gr.510 manuscript.[44] Furthermore, the 'foreign' element could be traced to Eudokia Ingerina, due to her supposed Scandinavian extraction.[45] While it does seem likely that this panel represents a gift given by an elite couple to Basil and Eudokia on their joint accession to power, again, what is most important here for this thesis is the role that the representation of the empress is performing. Her presence here underlines the divine blessings and the piety of the imperial couple, as a unit; together they also signify the continuation of the empire, taken within the context of the dynastic imagery consistently seen in other representations. As a gift, this also reflects that elite circles had taken on board the use of Old Testament, especially Davidic, imagery and its connotations, showcasing how effective this imperial branding had been within its contexts, just as the images of Theodora and Justinian in the consular diptych and in the mosaics of San Vitale had done so. Thus we see both the emperor and empress associated with the divine favour, kingship and imperial victory that was

[43] Maguire, 'Art of Comparing', pp.91-2. Both start from lowly origins (David a shepherd, Basil a groom), given opportunities, because of their talents and strength, by rulers who slip into madness and drunkenness, who then take power through the 'rightful' murder of that ruler, and subsequently their (potential) dynasty.
[44] Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, pp.185-93
[45] Maguire, 'The Art of Comparing', p.89; A. Guillou, 'Deux ivoires, Constantinopolitains dates du IXe et Xe siècle', in S. Dufrenne (ed.), *Byzance et les slaves. Études de civilisation: Mélanges Ivan Dujčev* (Paris, 1979), pp.209-11.

symbolised by the layered iconography of Christ, and imperial and Davidic imagery.

6.5 Literary Evidence

As has been noted, Eudokia rarely appears in the source material, and when she does, she is certainly subject to the problematic literary tropes that use women to characterise events and critique male figures. Even Leo VI's funerary oration of his parents is not helpful in this regard; it is not particularly telling of her public role or the activities that she undertook as empress, and focuses only on her shining character.[46] We do know that Eudokia was portrayed as being in charge of the bride show for Leo VI; though, due to the choice in bride, it is likely that this was a political decision that hung on the familial status of Theophano Martianake, rather than Eudokia's assessment of beauty, character or other looked for virtues.[47] We also see her seated beside Basil in a triumphal process for the baptism of her son, Stephen: an event that neatly tied her role as empress, associated with imperial victory, together with that of imperial mother and reflected their dynastic concerns.[48] The sources also mention that she donated a large amount to the people on Basil's accession, and so there is a glimpse of the philanthropic role of the empress coming through.[49] But, we see nothing of her in a role of patron. This is despite

[46] Leo calls Eudokia 'the finest of women' and the 'most aristocratic and virtuous woman who ever lived'. The oration also addressed some of the rumours; that Eudokia could have married Michael, but that she had a greater destiny, i.e. Basil: Leo VI, *Oraison funèbre de Basile I par son fils Léon VI le Sage,* ed. A. Vogt & I. Hausherr, Orientalia Christiana Periodica 26 (Rome, 1932): *Orat. Leo*, 52-6.
[47] Tougher assesses the discussion and source material on the choice of Theophano Martiniake: Tougher, *Leo VI*, pp.134-6.
[48] This took place on Christmas Day, 867, and the imperial couple were noted as being pulled along by white horses: *Leo Gram.*, 254.
[49] Theo. Cont., 256.

Basil's embarkment on a prolific building programme; we do not see the hand of Eudokia within any patronage. As with previous empresses, however, the historical record tells us of a no longer extant mosaic that held the representation of Eudokia that was within the newly-constructed Kainourgion in the Great Palace.

6.5.1 The Kainourgion Mosaic

Basil's building programme within Constantinople was extensive and included much work within the large complex of the Great Palace. This was part of a series of broader construction and remodelling work in the ninth century; Theophilos had begun to improve the Great Palace early in the century and, after Basil, this was continued by Leo.[50] Within the palatial complex, Basil constructed the Nea Ekklesia, several chapels, the polo fields, the Pentakoubouklon, and the Kainourgion.[51] Owing to the lack of archaeological remains, modern scholarship has to largely rely on literary sources to reconstruct much of the palatial complex, made particularly complicated by its continued use, up until 1081, and frequent amendments made by successive emperors. Thus, it is not known where the Kainourgion was situated, or how large it was: it has been described by scholars as a palace within a palace,

[50] Theophilos improved the Great Palace greatly and built the Trikonchos, Sigma and several pavilions: *ODB,* 'Great Palace'. Leo built churches, two of which were for his deceased partners, Theophano and Zoe, in the city and the new baths within the Great Palace, which contained a mosaic of himself and his fourth wife, Zoe Karbonopsina: Gerstel, 'Saint Eudocia', pp.705-7.

[51] *ODB*, 'Great Palace'. The polo field was called the Tzykanisterion. This information is recorded in some detail in the *Vita Basilii*: Theophanes Continuatus, *Vita Basilii*, in Theophanes Continuatus, Χρονογραφία, V, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB 45 (Bonn, 1838), 321ff; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), pp.192-9: *VBasil*, 78-90.

rooms of residence, or a separate palace entirely.[52] From the naming of some of his buildings, however, we can tell that Basil was keen to emphasise the sense of the new; it distinguished his building program clearly from those that had gone before, alongside his great ambition, but also authenticated 'something new by giving it a traditional identity'.[53] This mirrors Basil's use of Old Testament figures, and previous emperors like Constantine, to buoy his reign. The building of churches is, of course, rooted in imperial tradition.

The majority of the description of this structure comes from the *Vita Basilii*, wherein the author recorded not only the great life of Basil, but also the building works that he undertook, one of which was the Kainourgion.[54] The walls of the Kainourgion, the *Vita Basilii* tells us, were reveted with different coloured glass – opus sectile – but above that was gold tesserae and: 'the emperor, who is the creator of this work, enthroned together with his wife, Eudokia, both clad in imperial costume and wearing crowns… [their children] are represented round the building like shining stars, they, too, adorned with imperial vestments and crowns'.[55]

Thus we see that a large mosaic of Basil, Eudokia and their children decorated the new imperial palace, or residential rooms – not just Eudokia and the two son and heirs, as in Paris.gr.510. They are all, in the first instance, resplendent in imperial regalia and crowned. Eudokia and Basil are accorded special

---

[52] P. Magdalino, 'Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I', *JÖB* 37 (1987), pp.51-64; Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p.197; Tougher, *Leo VI*, p.49; *ODB*, 'Great Palace', all describe the Kainourgion slightly differently.
[53] In this regard, Magdalino points out the epithets of *Nea* Ekklesia, *Nea* Oikos, and *Nea* Mone, alongside others, as well as Kainourgion: Magdalino, 'Nea Ekklesia', pp.52-3. Dagron translates Kainourgion as 'New Chamber': Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, p.200.
[54] It has been suggested that Constantine VII wrote this vita to honour his grandfather and consequently himself. He would certainly have seen the mosaic within the palace.
[55] *VBasil,* 89, pp.197-8. There was also a middle layer of 'different decoration blooming with gold' in this decorative schema.

significance by their enthronement: this had not been seen for imperial couples since the coinage of the sixth century. The text continues on to say that both the male and female children carried books of divine law, so as to show that all of the imperial children 'shared in divine wisdom'.[56] An inscription accompanying the portraiture of the imperial children and one of the imperial couple reiterated the familial relationships between the two groups, as well as their duties to one another, and praised God for their continued safety.

The figures were all positioned beneath the cross on the ceiling; all were said to be viewed as if they were raising up their arms and expressing that it was due to the 'victorious symbol [i.e. the cross] everything that is good and agreeable to God has been accomplished and achieved in our reign'.[57] This is, of course, an interpolation by the author, but the perception is as important as the reality of the mosaic: we thus again see the association with victory and the Constantinian cross that was drawn on in Paris.gr.510. Around the building were the mosaicked images of their children: the text does not say how they were positioned together and it may have been they were portrayed separately, rather than a group. This could be comparable with the sole portrait of Alexander in the north gallery of Hagia Sophia, who would also have appeared in the Kainourgion mosaic.[58] However, the text is clear on the unified position of the imperial couple, once again displaying the rulers as an imperial unit. The text also repeatedly compared the children, and the imperial couple, to 'shining

[56] *VBasil,* 89, p.198. The text also says that it was due to Basil's original lack of education that he ensured his children were well educated.
[57] *VBasil,* 89, p.198.
[58] Alexander was the youngest son of Basil I, who was co-emperor with Leo, probably after their elder brother, Constantine, died. He was also the sole emperor for a year after the death of Leo (912-3).

stars', subtly implying their position within the heavens and the imperial hierarchy.[59]

This mosaic pieces together a strong and righteous dynastic image, which was divinely ordained. It associates all the constituent members of the dynasty with imperial rule and imperial victory. Their association with divine law is also key here. Tougher has suggested that this ties in with the *topos* of the wise emperor, and the portrayal and emphasis on Old Testament kingship, for legitimising purposes, was shown especially by the children who, in their inscription, thanks God for raising Basil from 'Davidic poverty'.[60] Thus, again, we see Eudokia being represented as a key figure within the imperial family, and also mixed within symbolic layers of Davidic comparison and traditional kingship. Though there is limited scope for empresses within these traditional archetypes of kingship, her consistent appearance within these contexts shows that it was appropriate, and of importance, to include the office of the empress.

Conclusion

Overall, it can be seen that the image of Eudokia was used fairly regularly during her tenure, largely in media which would have only reached a small, private audience; though the Kainourgion mosaic could have had a more public audience, as it was in the imperial residence, it still would have been a small, elite one. What can certainly be said about the focus of her image, however, is that it was centred on their children; her image was consistently used in the emphasis and glorification of the new dynasty. It could be assumed

[59] *VBasil*, 89, p.198.
[60] *VBasil*, 89, p.198; Tougher, *Leo VI*, pp.126-7. This is also briefly explored in Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, p.200.

therefore that the imperial pattern was undergoing a transformation which included the sons and heirs within the imperial dignity. It could be suggested that this may have been a response to the rumours surrounding Leo's parentage, but, perhaps more likely, it was to secure the line of succession from Basil; after all, he had no imperial lineage to speak of and had usurped the throne. This focus therefore on legitimacy, divine favour, comparisons with tradition kingship, and the concentration on the family image, all of whom were displayed in imperial regalia, may certainly have sprouted from these concerns. Thus, this is not so much competitive agency – there is little evidence to suggest Eudokia was involved with these portrayals – but her image certainly was being used competitively.

As with the previous ruling families of the ninth century, especially during the regency of Michael III, we already begin to see an emphasis on the family, with the historical record providing examples of daughters and sisters being named on coinage for the first time and in inscriptions.[61] Thus, although circumstantially the evidence may suggest that Eudokia's image was being used for the purposes of damage control and to present a clearly legitimate imperial family, as well as heirs, it may also be that a trend was developing in the interests of familial ties. Though the next case study of Theophano is very much removed from her familial connections, this is a trope that reappears throughout the Middle Byzantine period.

[61] The daughters of Basil I were named on an inscription which appeared on the sea wall of the Golden Horn, copied down in the sixteenth century, which reads 'God help Leo *despotes*, Alexander, Constantine, Anna, Helena and Maria, the *porphyrogennetoi*': Mango, 'Eudocia Ingerina', note 35; Tougher, *Leo VI*, p.228, for the translation.

Chapter Seven: Theophano

As the first three-quarters of the tenth century might be aptly described as a period of regencies, short-lived emperors, and bloodless usurpations, it may come as little surprise that there are few extant, securely identified images of imperial women. For example, Zoe Karbonopsina appeared on the base metal coinage during the regency for her son, Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (945-959), in the 910s, though it was for a limited time and there were few types.[1] Zoe was the last empress on a coin until the joint rule of Zoe and Theodora Porphyrogennetae in 1042. This is particularly unusual when considering the pivotal position of Theophano during and after the reigns of Romanos II (959-63) and Nikephoros II Phokas (963-69), acting as regent in between the two for her infant sons.[2] Theophano also appears in the twelfth-century Madrid Skylitzes manuscript, but as will be discussed in the next chapter, the miniatures of this manuscript can be overused in terms of their usefulness.[3]

The gap in imagery could in part be explained by the rule of Basil II from 976 onwards; as he had no wife, and thereby no legitimate children, there were no *augustae* over his half-century long rule to portray on his coinage. There were the two possibilities of the saintly empresses, Theodora and Theophano Martiniake, in the *Menologion* of Basil II, but as has already been discussed,

---

[1] *DOC III.II*, cat.1-2.2.
[2] It was convention that regents were displayed numismatically, as well women who acted legitimisers for reigns – Theophano enacted both of these roles. It may also have been expected for John I Tzimiskes to portray the image of Theodora, who was the daughter of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, and thus would have displayed his links to a previous, long-lived reign. However, both Nikephoros and Tzimiskes used the Virgin Mary on their coinage, which had only been done once before on the later coinage of Leo VI: V. Penna, 'The Mother of God on Coins and Lead Seals', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens & Milan, 2000), pp.209-17, p.210.
[3] For a full break down of the miniatures of the Skylitzes Madrid manuscript, see V. Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes* (Leiden, 2002).

these empresses ruled in the previous century and these depictions were not contemporaneous with their tenures and so do not fall under the remit here.[4] In a similar vein, the inlaid marble icon of a Saint Eudokia was commented on in the previous chapter, despite technically dating from the tenth century.[5]

One of the likelier candidates from the tenth century is Bertha-Eudokia, who came to Byzantium from the Italian kingdom to marry Romanos II. She was junior empress for up to five years, and died young in 949. Potentially, she was represented in an ivory, now found in the Cabinet des Medailles, Paris (fig.2.21). An emperor and an empress, dressed in Byzantine regalia, are blessed by Christ, who stands between them. They both have inscriptions above their heads: 'Romanos, *basileus* of the Romans' and 'Eudokia, *basilissa* of the Romans'. This identity of the imperial couple has been questioned: Kalavrezou-Maxeiner has firmly argued for an identification of Romanos IV Diogenes (1068-71) and Eudokia Makrembolitissa (1059-78) whereas, more recently, both Cutler and Parani have argued for their reidentification of Romanos II and Bertha-Eudokia.[6] I am certainly more convinced by the latter argument; the decisive factor is the lack of beard of Romanos. This was certainly the style for eleventh-century emperors, as can be seen consistently in their numismatic portraits. It also works within the context of Constantine VII and Romanos II's

[4] Vat.gr.1613. fol.249 for Saint Theophano (16th December) and fol.392 for Saint Theodora, (11th February), who, fittingly, is portrayed as holding an icon of Christ.
[5] S. Gerstel, cat.8, in T. Mathews, 'Religious Organisation', in H. C. Evans & W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York, NY, 1997), pp.21-81, pp.41-2. This plaque was also discussed in Gerstel, 'Saint Eudocia', pp.699-707.
[6] I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, 'Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory', *DOP* 31 (1977), pp.305-25; A. Cutler, 'The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory', in C. Moss & K. Kiefer (eds.), *Byzantine East and Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton, NJ, 1995), pp.605-10; M. Parani, 'The Romanos Ivory and the New Tokali Kilise: Imperial Costume as a Tool for Dating Byzantine Art', *Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l'antiquité et moyen-âge* 49 (2001), pp.15-28.

shared reign: Constantine had been insecure on his throne from a young age, and was no doubt eager to ensure an easier transition to his own son, through the awarding of titles and imperial representations. Constantine was also known to have been a patron and collector of ivories – one of Constantine's palace chapels, for instance, had a templon of ivory – and much art of this medium has been identified from this period.[7] Despite Kalavrezou-Maxeiner's focus on figural, stylistic elements that were compared to eleventh-century models, particularly the mosaics at Daphne, Cutler's iconographic and stylistic analysis remains much more convincing.[8] However, because of Bertha-Eudokia's short tenure (and for most of this, she was a child), and her single image, she has not be chosen as the main focus of this chapter.

There was another Theophano from this century, often referred to as the 'Byzantine princess', who is suitable for this case study. Her image appears several times in different media, only she is not based in Constantinople, but instead ruled from the Holy Roman Empire. Theophano, it has been suggested, was the daughter of Sophia Phokaina and Constantine Skleros, making her both the niece of John I by his first wife, Maria Skleraina, and the great-niece of Nikephoros II Phokas.[9] Although she was not in the immediate family of the emperor at the time, she was closely related on both sides of her family. In 972, when she was around twelve, she was sent to Italy, and both married to the Holy Roman Emperor Otto II, and crowned empress. They had five children

[7] V. Zalesskaya, cat.93, in A. Weyl Carr, 'Popular Imagery', in H. C. Evans & W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York, NY, 1997), pp.113-81, pp.147-8.
[8] Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, 'Eudokia Makrembolitissa', pp.324-5; Cutler, 'Date and Significance', pp.608-9. Cutler is also convincing in his analysis of the titles of the couple and dress of Eudokia to enable a tenth-century date.
[9] C. Settipani, *Continuités des élites à Byzance durant les siècles obscurs. Les princes caucasiens et l'Empire du VIe au IXe siècle* (Paris, 2006), pp.244-5.

within the next eight years, all but one surviving into adulthood. She bore only one son, who became Otto III in 983, and due to his young age, she acted as his regent until her death in 991.

During her reign as empress of the Holy Roman Empire, her image appeared in many forms: she was represented in possibly two ivory panels, a golden cover for the Gospels, an altar-ciborium, possibly in a now badly-damaged fresco, and medallions, all of which will be discussed this case study. Her portraiture is also of interest to this study: she is shown in Byzantine-style regalia, alongside more western clothing. The spread of her imagery also reflects the itinerant nature of the Ottonian court; a different mode of rule than the more sedentary and centralised Byzantine style. Although never mentioned in Byzantine sources, she was mentioned regularly in contemporary Western sources. She was active in the political sphere until the end of her life, and there are still extant letters written to and by her, to other politically significant figures in the late tenth century. She was also well known for her patronage of religious institutions, and, in due course, two of her daughters were dedicated as nuns and eventually became the abbesses of their monasteries. As such, due to her multiple representations, her active role as empress, and her position as one of the first of a wave of exogamic marriage both in and out of the Byzantine Empire, Theophano will be considered for the tenth-century case study.[10]

[10] In terms of title, I shall be referring to Theophano and her mother-in-law Adelheid as empresses, as they were both married (and crowned with) to Holy Roman Emperors. They are both also known in the source material as *imperatrix augusta*, though this is not consistent. Women before this, or from peripheral polities, will largely be known as queens.

7.1 Exogamic Practices

As well as being a time of short-lived emperors and, in part, instability, it could be argued that there was also an overall shift in attitude in the early tenth century: this period was one of greater interaction between Byzantium, its neighbours and further afield.[11] Interaction was spread across a variety of areas, and fortunately records of diplomatic ventures are extant from this period. These included arranging the betrothal of members of royal families from Western Europe to Russia, to the members of the Byzantine imperial family, in a way that had not been seen before. Although women of noble birth had on occasion been married into the imperial family of Byzantium, there had been very little in terms of marrying imperial Byzantine women to foreign rulers.[12] *To My Own Son Romanos*, famously compiled by Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos in the tenth century, claims that this lack of foreign marital negotiations was due to the wishes of Constantine the Great, who, Constantine VII tells us, believed that those who were alien to the Romans, and especially those who were unbaptised, should never be allied with by marriage.[13] The main issue seems to have been with marriage alliances with 'the tribes of the

---

[11] This section of my thesis has been expanded on in a forthcoming article: L. A. Wainwright, 'Import, Export: The Global Impact of Byzantine Marriage Alliances during the Tenth Century' in L. Brubaker, R. Darley & D. Reynolds (eds.), *Global Byzantium*: *Proceedings of the 50th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Abingdon & New York, NY, forthcoming).

[12] For discussion on exogamic practices of the Byzantine imperial families, see R. J. Macrides, 'Dynastic Marriages and Spiritual Kinship', in J. Shepard & S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers form the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, SPBS 1 (Aldershot, 1994), pp.380-410; J. Shepard, 'Marriages towards the Millennium', in P. Magdalino (ed.), *Byzantium in the Year 1000* (Leiden, 2003), pp.1-33; J. Herrin, 'Marriage: A Fundamental Element', pp.302-20. The eighth century saw at least four betrothals of non-Byzantine women to imperial men – with only two being consummated – but only in the early tenth century did exogamic marriages become numerous.

[13] Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, Προς τον ίδιον υιόν Ρωμανόν, ed. G. Moravcsik (Washington D.C., 1966), trans. R. J. H. Jenkins, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus: De Administrando Imperio* (Washington D.C., 1966, repr. 2008): *To Romanos*, 13, 106ff, pp.70-1.

north'; demonstrated by the negative overtones of his later discussion of the marriage of a Khazar princess, Theodora, to Justinian II, and the later marriage of Maria-Eirene to the Khan of Bulgaria, Peter I.[14] This section of Constantine's work, however, does come with the proviso that the Franks were suitable to marry because of Constantine the Great's connection with that area.[15] Macrides has argued that this interpolation certainly had motive behind it; as seen in the discussion on the ivory, Constantine's son, Romanos, was married to Bertha-Eirene, daughter of Hugh of Arles: he could not disapprove of his own son's marriage.[16]

Thus, this period was unusual in that it had several exogamic alliances. There were at least five women within the imperial sphere who travelled outside of the borders of the Byzantine Empire to marry. Anna, the daughter of Leo the Wise was in all likelihood married to the Holy Roman Emperor, Louis the Blind;[17] Maria-Eirene, granddaughter of Romanos I Lekapenos, married Peter I; Anna Porphyrogennete, the daughter of Theophano and Romanos II, married Vladimir of Kiev;[18] Zoe Porphyrogennete's betrothal to Otto III was cut short by his early death;[19] and Theophano, who married Otto II. This was the beginning, especially during the Komnenid period, of consistent exogamic practices, but Theophano is one of the first of whom we have any detailed information.

---

[14] *To Romanos*, 13, 106ff, pp.70-1. See Appendix 1.4.
[15] *To Romanos*, 13, 106ff, pp.70-1.
[16] Macrides, 'Dynastic Marriages', pp.268-9.
[17] A letter of Patriarch Nicholas, during the reign of Leo VI, to Pope Anastasius III in 912 mentions the marriage of daughter to a Frankish king, cousin of 'a certain Bertha', to whom evil things had happened: *Mystikos*, 32, pp.219-221. The 'imperial' name of the child of the union, Charles Constantine could indicate Byzantine ancestry, and may have wanted to remind everyone of this fact also.
[18] Skylitzes, 16.17, p.319.
[19] Arnulf of Milan, *Liber gestorum recentium*, ed. C. Zey, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1994): *Liber gest.*, I, xiii.

7.2 Competition and Influence

The thousand-year anniversary of Theophano's death occurred in 1991, leading to a spate of research about and around her life. Topics ranged from international relations and diplomacy at this time; the reflection of her marriage as both the decline and rise of two medieval empires; the influences, if any, that Byzantium had on the West, especially in terms of art and material culture; education and intellectual culture; and comparisons of 'emperorship', to name but a few areas.[20] Several of these resulted in the argument that Theophano brought cultural change to the Holy Roman Empire – following the popular legend that Theophano brought the fork to Western Europe.[21] As has been examined by Blake, the Ottonians were likely operating more under the guise of 'competitive sharing' and indicated a tension in the developing relations with the Byzantine Empire.[22] Competition between the two empires is seen throughout the mid- to late tenth century through the territorial expansions in

[20] Three books resulted from two conferences and an exhibition based around Theophano in 1991: A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995); A. von Euw & P. Schreiner (eds.), *Kaiserin Theophanu: Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends* (Cologne, 1991); A. von Euw *et al* (eds.), *Kunst im Zeitalter der Kaiserin Theophanu: Akten des Internationalen Colloquiums verstaltet vom Schnütgen-Museum* (Cologne, 1993).

[21] That a Byzantine woman had done so was first suggested by Peter Damian in the eleventh century. However, Peter was discussing the elaborate lifestyle of a nobly-born Greek woman, and does not name her: Peter Damian, *Institutio monialis*, Opusculum 50; *PL* 145: *P.D. Institutio*, 145, col.744B-D. Scholars have suggested the woman's identity as both Theophano and Maria Argyropoulou, the relative of Basil II who married the son of the doge in 1002. Irrespective, in Peter's view, this woman was decadent and sinful, and is more likely a reflection of Peter's views of highborn women than anything concrete about Theophano.

[22] S. Blake, *Competition or Admiration? Byzantine Visual Culture in Western Imperial Courts, 497-1002* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2015), pp.15-17, 299-313. This theory of syncretism due to competition, rather than some other aspect like admiration, was recently coined by Robert Hayden: R. Hayden, 'Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites in South Asia and the Balkans', *Current Anthropology* 43.2 (2002), pp.205-31.

southern Italy, and fractious incidents with use of appropriate titles.[23]

The sigillographic conventions of the Holy Roman emperors can shed some light on this matter; in the seals of Otto I (fig.2.22) and then Otto II (fig.2.23), the emperor was depicted in frontal bust form, with sceptre and orb – through no cross – crowned and wearing a *chlamys,* with the titles *AVG[ustus]* and *IMP[erator]* prominent next to their name.[24] Thus, even before the marriage of Theophano to Otto II, elements of both ancient Roman and Byzantine tradition were being harnessed into the royal iconographic program of the Ottonians. The frontal pose, crown, and the chlamys was certainly something that the Byzantines were famed for, but the title choices, as well as the language, and the lack of Christian symbolism connotes something more akin to Roman conventions. And this imagery was what the Holy Roman emperors used for their correspondence, giving us some idea of the confidence of their appropriation and their expected reaction. Thus, though we may see Theophano as bringing a Byzantinising style with her, it must be seen in this context: syncretic elements were already clearly visible, from title to costume, even to the manner and apparatus of sealing letters. As we will see, Theophano's images were used as a continuation of the appropriation of this traditional power base, and a further confirmation of the Ottonians right to do so.

7.3 Carved Images

The most famous of Theophano's representations is that of the ivory that

[23] *Embassy*, 6-7, pp.242-4; 47-51, pp.267-70. Liutprand reports how a letter addressed to the 'king of the Greeks', instead of emperor of the Romans, enrages the court of Nikephoros I.

[24] P. E. Schramm, *Die deutschen Kaiser und Könige in Bildern ihrer Zeit* (Munich, 1983), pp.87-9, pl.83, 88.

portrays the Ottonian imperial couple, though this is not the only image, or even the only carved image of Theophano that is left extant in the historical record. In this next section, Theophano's representation in ivory and on a gilt-book cover will be discussed.

7.3.1 The Cluny Ivory

Unlike many of the other ivories looked at in this thesis, the ivory now kept in the Cluny Museum, Paris, is firmly identifiable as representing Theophano and Otto, blessed by Christ, and as a celebration of their union and rule (fig.2.24). Probably intended for use as a book cover, it clearly appropriates traditional Byzantine imagery of the commemoration of the wedding and ascension to power of imperial couples, as seen on, for example, commemorative coins of the fifth century.[25] Theophano and Otto are in imperial regalia – the *chlamys* and *loros* and crowned with *pendilia* – surrounded by the imperial furnishings of the baldachin and stools, and bear Greek titles identifying them as 'Otto, *imperator* of the Romans, *augustus*' and 'Theophano, *imperatrix* of the Romans, *augusta*'. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner has argued that instead of this being a celebration of their union, this plaque was a gift to commemorate Otto's attack on Byzantine-held lands and the extension of his imperial claims.[26]

The dating of the Romanos-Eudokia ivory certainly has implications for the Theophano-Otto ivory: if the former represented Romanos II and Bertha-

[25] C. T. Little, cat.337, in W. D. Wixom, 'Byzantine Art and the Latin West', in H. C. Evans & W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York, NY, 1997), pp.434-509, pp.499-500.
[26] Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, 'Eudokia Makrembolitissa', p.316. This attack was on Tarentum, which, according to Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, must mean that the ivory dates to 982.

Eudokia, then it can be argued that latter used it as a model. However, if the Romanos-Eudokia ivory represented Romanos IV Diogenes and Eudokia Makrembolitissa, then, of course, that argument becomes invalid. It would seem that the Romanos-Eudokia ivory served as a prototype, but different artisans and distance could account for variations in style.[27] What most scholars have agreed on, however, is that this ivory was in all probability patronised by John Philagathos – a section of the inscription in the field calls on the Lord, to help his servant John – and gifted to the imperial couple during the decade of their rule.[28] Here Theophano is resplendent in Byzantine regalia and titulature, alongside Otto. Though likely for a small, elite audience, her representation can leave no doubt that she was associated with Byzantium and all the signifiers of imperial power that connotated. Their union and their rule are blessed by Christ; the audience can be in no doubt of their legitimacy as a ruling couple, their divine favour, and their success as an imperial couple. That this plaque was a gift – and the donor can be seen under the feet of Otto – also indicates that this perception was shared and transmitted within the elite circles of the Holy Roman Empire.

[27] Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, 'Eudokia Makrembolitissa', pp.321-2, suggests that it could have been a prototype, but due to stylistic differences, sticks to her assessment of the Romanos-Eudokia ivory as eleventh century.

[28] Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, 'Eudokia Makrembolitissa', pp.315-6; J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'The Art of Byzantium and its Relation to Germany in the Time of the Empress Theophano', in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.211-30, p.211. John Philagathos was an important member of the court, who acted as a mediator between the western and eastern empires, and was tutor for Otto III. He became a bishop and, possibly due to his connection with the imperial family, became anti-pope, 997-8. Thietmar also claimed Theophano, in particular, favoured him: Thietmar, 30, pp.172-3.

7.3.2 Codex Aureus of Echternach

Theophano is also depicted on what is now known as the Codex Aureus of Echternach; her representation, along with that of her son, is inscribed on the gilt book cover (fig.2.25a). Originally, the gilt-covered Gospel was a gift, but the cover was removed and was reused around fifty years later to cover the current codex.[29] For the viewer, Theophano is on the bottom right, and Otto mirrors her on the opposite side; their hands are raised toward the central scene of the Crucified Christ. While Theophano is less elaborately dressed, with a veiled headdress (fig.2.25b), Otto wears a crown. The two are identified in their accompanying inscriptions by their names and their titles: IMP[erator]. The two rulers are also accompanied by a host of saintly figures arranged around the central piece of the Crucifixion, including the Virgin Mary and the four Evangelists, indicating their divine favour and status. This scene has been interpreted as a procession around the central ivory, led by the local patrons and founder of the church of Echternach, also depicted.[30] As we will see with the ciborium in Milan, this may further be an effort of the imperial family to interpolate themselves within local traditions and networks. Additionally, Otto and Theophano are clearly, by position and by pose, in the role of donor and supplicant.[31] Wolf has argued that this piece was created by Theophano out of gratitude on her recovery from an illness: she then donated it to Archbishop Egbert, and Echternach Abbey.[32]

---

[29] It is now in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.
[30] H. Westermann-Angerhausen, 'Did Theophano Leave Her Mark on the Ottonian Arts?', in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.244-64, p.264.
[31] Westermann-Angerhausen disagrees and sees their pose as one of equality with the saints in the ceremony, as 'participants and bearers of the 'apostolic' missionary task': Westermann-Angerhaussen, 'Ottonian Arts', p.264.
[32] G. Wolf, 'Zur Datierung des Buchedeckels des Codex Aureus Epternacensis', *Hémecht* 42.2 (1990), pp.147-52.

Dodwell has argued that art from this period, including the patronage of manuscript art, was created and used to 'confirm the authority of those in power': he sees this representation as a propagation of that authority, in particularly Byzantine fashion.[33] While slightly different in execution, this donor image is comparable to that of Paris.gr.510, as well as the Palazzo Casket ivory: here we see the image of Christ, though crucified, with imperial and other holy figures, indicating the reciprocal glorification of the figures within. Thus, despite the lack of Byzantine regalia within this particular depiction, the positioning and the medium were still able to connote to and co-opt traditional Byzantine symbols of power.

7.4 Medallions

There are two lead medallions still extant that bear the image of Theophano; they are very similar to each other in that both Theophano and Otto are being blessed by Christ, who stands between them, and the accompanying letters are Greek.[34] Though on one medallion (fig.2.26a) these letters spell out only the abbreviation IC XC for Christ and the names of the two rulers, on the other medallion (fig.2.26b) the names are ended with the slanted αC, which indicated the title of the *augusti*. Rather than mirroring the sigollographic portrayals, which one might expect, these medallions instead reflect the portrayal of Theophano and Otto in the Cluny ivory, both in positioning and in descriptors; it was seen as appropriate to portray the imperial couple with Greek names and being blessed by Christ, in a

[33] C. R. Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West, 800-1200* (London & New Haven, CT, 1993), pp.42, 123.
[34] Schramm, *Kaiser und Könige*, pl.92.

Byzantinising style. While, the audience of these must have been necessarily limited and elite, this does reflect the nomenclature potentially used by Theophano. This yet again showcases how the image of Theophano and her links with imperial Byzantium were being used to associate the imperial couple with the legitimacy and traditional power signifiers of the Byzantines.

7.5 Wall Decorations

There are also potential images of Theophano in the Italian peninsula. All of the tenth-century Ottonian kings had a troubled relationship with this area; though Otto I claimed it by conquest and was crowned in Rome in 962 – tapping into the ceremonial base of power that was used by Charlemagne in 800 – there were consistent issues with consolidation and expansion.[35] The southern part remained as smaller principalities – for example, Benevento and Capua – and the southernmost part was under the control of the Byzantines. It is during this period that we see the images of the imperial family appear within the newly conquered area. In a monastery at Rieti, for instance, there is a potential image of Theophano in the monastery of San Salvator Maggiore (fig.2.28).[36] Although images of the fresco show it in a badly damaged state, the two figures have been identified as Theophano and Otto II, and it is able to give us some idea about their representation. Though some might suggest the

[35] Otto I's association with Charlemagne gave him a platform from which to 'claim' Italy as part of their ancestral lands. He also married Adelheid, who, as the wife of Lothair II of Italy had been queen of Italy, to further legitimise this expansion. The Byzantines were not happy about Otto's expansionist policies; Liutprand uses the 'ancestral' argument when question about Otto's actions, as well as the needs of the people: *Embassy*, 6-7, pp.242-3.
[36] Rieti is about 90 kilometres north-east of Rome. The fresco has now largely been lost: K. Ciggaar, 'Theophano: An Empress Reconsidered', in A. Davids, (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.49-63, p.49, note 2.

presence of halos indicates that these are posthumous portrayals, Ciggaar argues that this image is trying to imitate the regalia of the Byzantines, and thus are tapping into those symbols of power and legitimacy.[37] This is certainly in keeping with what we have seen so far, and links in contextually with the situation in and needs of expansion and consolidation within Italy; leading to 'competitive sharing' with rival power bases like Byzantium. The image of *illa imperatrix Greca* would no doubt have helped this.[38]

Another such image is on the ciborium of the Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio, in Milan. This ciborium held the images of St Ambrose on one side of the arch, with two male figures (fig.2.27b), and the Virgin Mary on the opposite side, with two female figures (fig.2.27a). Though scholarly opinion has been divided on the identity of the figures, through stylistic dating, this could reasonably be Otto I and Otto II – who ruled as co-emperors from 967-72 – and Adelheid and Theophano.[39] All of the figures wear simple crowns, with the exception of the woman on the viewer's right. Schramm has shown, however, that the Virgin holds a crown; perhaps ready to crown the woman – could this then be a dedication to the church on Theophano's accession to the throne? While it

---

[37] Ciggaar, 'An Empress Reconsidered', pp.49-50. Through discussion of Byzantine images within San Vitale, San Apollinare Nuovo, and portable manuscripts, Ciggaar shows that the nimbus was considered part of the imperial uniform of the Byzantines. However, for Ciggaar, this was a reflection of the collision of cultures, rather than a concerted effort within this particular context to showcase the imperial family as legitimate rulers of the area.

[38] In the source material, Theophano is largely known as the 'Greek empress', indicating that she kept the association with the eastern empire throughout her life, despite only having lived there for just over a decade: Odo of Cluny, *Epitaph of Adelheid*, ed. B. Schütte, MGH SRG 66 (Hannover, 1994), trans. S. Gilsdorf, *Queenship and Sanctity: The* Lives *of Mathilda and the* Epitaph *of Adelheid* (Washington, D.C., 2004), pp.128-44: *Epit. Adel.,* 7, p.134.

[39] Schramm, *Kaiser und Könige*, pp.74, 189. The other potential couples are Hugo of Provence, king of Italy (924-47), his son Lothar (co-king from 931), and their wives Bertha of Schwabia and Adelheid of Burgundy (who later married Otto I) respectively – all four ruled together from 937-47. Another possibility is Berengar II, king of Italy (950-61), with his son, Adalbert, and their wives, Willa of Tuscany and Gerberga of Mâcon – all four ruled together in the 950s until the rise of Otto in 961.

cannot be definitively proven that this image is of Theophano, it can be seen within the broader context of images of this imperial family, and indeed of Theophano. By becoming involved with this church, the imperial family was also tapping into local networks of legitimacy, prestige and approval, through the popular local cult of St Ambrose. As Schramm notes, this church was prestigious, with centuries of use and tradition behind it; it is no surprise that the new dynasty wished to be associated with it.[40] As with Byzantine images of the empress, though there is no identification, it still represents the office of the empress, indicating the piety and generous patronage of both that office, and of the imperial family.

7.6 Literary Representations

There is much to be said about the treatment of Theophano in contemporary sources. Although never mentioned by Byzantine sources, she does not come off positively in most Western texts, which MacLean has shown were just as likely to use gendered critique as Byzantine sources were.[41] Perhaps some of this is a reflection of the unexpectedness of her marriage to Otto II. The sudden accession of her uncle, John I, to imperial power in the Byzantine Empire in 969, and the demands on him in terms of military struggles to both the north-west, with the Kievan Rus and the Bulgarians, and the Abbasid Empire in the east, may have warranted a quick solution to any prospective problems in the west, as outlined by Liutprand of Cremona in his

[40] Schramm, *Kaiser und Könige*, p.190.
[41] S. MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship* (Oxford, 2017), pp.127-40. Liutprand is particularly known for using sexual impropriety to construct negative narratives for the women of the tenth centuries, which then reflects badly upon the men and their houses as a whole.

earlier *Embassy* – the purpose of this negotiation being the marriage of an imperial daughter to an Ottonian, though, as mentioned, he had been sent for Anna Porphyrogennete.[42] The solution negotiated between Archbishop Gero of Cologne and the representatives of John I Tzimiskes, was that the expected marriage alliance would be between Theophano and Otto.[43] In the two years between his accession to imperial power, and her marriage to Otto, would she have been able to learn the correct languages, or indeed been prepared to rule? It may be considered unlikely that she would have had the same level of preparation as the daughters of an emperor, who would have been brought up with the knowledge that they might some day be in this position. However, she was the daughter of an elite family, and thus would have received education of a similar level in anticipation of her own marriage with another elite male, at the very least.[44]

Even if she were prepared for the huge shift in her circumstances, what she could not avoid was the negative reaction to her arrival. The Ottonians had specifically sent envoys for a *porphyrogennete* princess and all the prestige that came along with such a title. We can affirm the importance of this through the consistent use of Theophano's image. As earlier ones, the envoy was originally sent with designs on Anna, daughter of Romanos II and Theophano, but this

---

[42] Shepard, 'Marriages', pp.2-4, 10-1. *Embassy*, 7, p.243, for Liutprand's request for Anna, the purple-born daughter of Theophano and Romanos, when on a diplomatic visit to the court of Nikephoros I.
[43] Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon,* ed. R. Holtzmann, MGH SRG 9 (Berlin, 1935), trans. D. A. Warner, *Ottonian Germany: The* Chronicon *of Thietmar of Merseburg,* Manchester Medieval Sources (Manchester & New York, NY, 2001): Thietmar, 2.15, p.102-3.
[44] For discussion on this, see J. Herrin, 'Theophano: Considerations on the Education of a Byzantine Princess', in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.64-85; J. M. van Winter, 'The Education of the Daughters of the Nobility in the Ottonian Empire', in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.86-98.

request was declined. Yet who they received was not only not a *porphyrogennete,* but was not the daughter of an emperor at all. Although she was certainly in the imperial inner circle, this may not have pleased Otto I and his court initially, perhaps seeing it as an insult: first of all, not receiving the daughter that they had asked for, and actually receiving one of a perceived lower status. Thietmar of Merseburg, for instance, writes that there were some who tried to dissuade the emperor from carrying out this alliance, and to send the bride-to-be home.[45] Otto decided against this course of action and allowed the union to occur, as shown by him being the signatory of their marriage charter, but the initial backlash may have been difficult for her to overcome. However, a *Vita* of Mathilda, the grandmother of Otto II, does describe Theophano positively as a 'princess from the imperial palace' of Greece, so perhaps not all involved were of the same opinion.[46]

Theophano may also have had to contend with prejudice against 'the Greeks'. There had certainly been some issues with the Byzantine lands in Italy, and the changing situation with the lands of Benevento and Capua.[47] The negative impression some Westerners may have had can be seen in a variety of sources – Liutprand of Cremona, for instance, is famous for his negative portrayal of the Byzantines and his hostility towards his hosts, which was quite a change from his first embassy trip to Constantinople.[48] Thietmar described

---

[45] Thietmar, 2.15, pp.102-3.
[46] *Vita of Mathilda*, ed. B. Schütte, MGH SRG 66 (Hannover, 1994), trans. S. Gilsdorf, *Queenship and Sanctity: The* Lives *of Mathilda and the* Epitaph *of Adelheid* (Washington, D.C., 2004), pp.71-127: *Vit. Math.*, 15, p.87.
[47] This can be seen most of all in Liutprand's *Embassy*. Mayr-Harting suggests that this text was written to convince the rulers of Capua and Benevento to ally themselves with the Ottonians: H. Mayr-Harting, 'Liudprand of Cremona's Account of His Legation to Constantinople (968) and Ottonian Imperial Strategy', *EHR* 116 (2001), pp.539-56.
[48] Whereas previous comments about Constantinople by Liutprand are positive (*Antapodosis*), the *Embassy* is distinctively negative.

the Greeks as having 'customary slyness', killing his kinsmen without provocation, and being so 'arrogant' as to lead to their downfall.[49] This negative attitude towards her kinsman may certainly have had an effect on the portrayal of Theophano.

7.6.1 Patronage

However, from the textual record, we can see that, particularly during the regency of Otto III from 983, Theophano was politically active and visible during her tenure. Due to the claims of Henry the Wrangler after the death of Otto II, Otto III's position as the infant emperor was in danger. Scholars have often laid the retention of his rule at the feet of Theophano and Adelheid, and their organisation of '*colloquium dominarum*' in 985, but, as shown by MacLean, this was unlikely to be as female-orientated as has been suggested previously.[50] However, it seems clear that their success was largely down to the valuable networks, inclusive of the patronage of clergy and monasteries, which the royal women had built up. During this regency, Otto and Theophano gifted a book containing their representations, carved in gold, to the monastery at Magdeburg.[51] As seen with the Echternach manuscript, the gift-giving of portable items like this was popular within this period. It also goes hand in

[49] Thietmar, 2.15, pp.102-3.
[50] MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, pp.167-8, 171-2. MacLean suggests that there was no concept of the mother regent as there was in Byzantium, and instead there was something more akin to a regency council, that involved Theophano, Adelheid and senior members of the clergy. See P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1983), especially p.142, and generally for discussions on the authority and actions of royal women during this period.
[51] Theitmar, 3.1, p.127. McKitterick records this incorrectly as Otto II and Theophano, rather than Otto III: R. McKitterick, 'Ottonian Intellectual Culture in the Tenth Century', in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.169-93, p.175. This does not seem to have been thought of as the origin of the Echternach manuscript, despite the similarities: Westermann-Angerhausen, 'Ottonian Arts', p.264.

hand with the patronage and privileges awarded to monasteries.

The patronage of Ottonian monasteries was a contentious issue during the tenth century, and the imperial family had to deal with them carefully.[52] The clergy of these monasteries were able to hold a great deal of clout in the tenth century, and we see evidence for their involvement with political issues consistently.[53] This is likely why members of the imperial family took on or were gifted specific patron roles for a number of monasteries. For instance, among several other properties, Theophano was given Nordhausen on her marriage to Otto II.[54] Nordhausen was originally founded by Mathilde, grandmother of Otto II; perhaps used as a subtle association with the earlier, prestigious queen.[55] During her rule, we see evidence for her patronage of the monasteries of the San Salvatore in Pavia, one in Frankfurt, and in Rome, as well as Magdeburg at the beginning of her reign and St Nicholas in Aachen.[56] Her particular favourite, where she was buried in 991, was St Pantaleon, Cologne, which had benefitted greatly from the '*diva augusta*'; Ciggaar takes this a sign of her association with her Byzantine background.[57] Evidently, her choices of patronage were spread across the empire, perhaps reflecting the itinerant nature of the Ottonian court

---

[52] MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, pp.144-6, describes how Otto I had to deal with the rivalry between Gandersheim, of which the monastic community believed itself to have a special role with and in the commemoration of the royal house, and the newly-elevated archbishopric of Magdeburg.

[53] Theophano, for instance, relied upon the support of several members of the clergy during the regency: Gerbert of Aurillac, Archbishop Adalbero of Reims, Bishop Hildenold of Worms, and Archbishop Willigis of Mainz. This has been noted from the epistolary and charter evidence.

[54] MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, p.154

[55] MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, pp.154, 158. Theophano was also given imperial estates in East Francia (as well as lands in Saxony) previously owned by Mathilda. Mathilda was popular, and had two saints lives written about her: see *VMath.* This association might also be made through the couple naming their daughter, Mathilde.

[56] MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, p.157; Ciggaar, 'An Empress Reconsidered', pp.58-9.

[57] The church was named for the eastern medical saint, Panteleemon, and his relics had been translated from Nikomedia by Bishop Bruno of Cologne: Ciggaar, 'An Empress Reconsidered', p.59. The *Translatio S. Albini* refers to Theophano as *diva augusta* and discussed her activities there: MGH SS XV, pp.686-8.

and the different pressures that entailed – as we have seen, this was mirrored in the diverse spread of her portraiture.

While there is some dispute in the scholarship over the precise number, there is evidence for Theophano acting to intervene with her husband on behalf of religious institutions, requesting support for their continued upkeep or privileges.[58] Just as it was for Byzantine empresses, this was important for her role as empress of the Holy Roman Empire; previous queens had certainly been involved in the intervention for and patronage of ecclesiastical institutions. During Theophano's tenure as regent until her death in 991, there were only 58 charters but we might see this as 'carefully crafted political statements, symbols of alliance, or even peace treaties'; it was cautious political manoeuvring, rather than a lack of impetus or interest in further patronage.[59] We can further see the importance of monasteries for queenship through two of Theophano's daughters, Sophie and Adelheid. They were abbesses at monasteries of key political significance, Gandersheim and Quedlinburg, and enacted the role of kingmakers in the eleventh century, due to their imperial connections and their 'enhanced sacral place and role'.[60] The continuous action of Theophano, in regards to patronage and involvement with ecclesiastical structures, underlines how important it was for the empress to be seen and to be represented as generous and pious, as well as in the role of intercessor and patron. This was certainly a role enacted by previous queens, and was not a

[58] Whereas Leyser gives the number as 76, Nash counts 68, 34 of which are by herself, the rest with other notables: K. Leyser, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Carolingian and Ottonain Centuries* (London, 1994), p.159; Nash, *Empress Adelaide*, p.148.
[59] MacLean, *Ottonian Queenship*, pp.169-70. MacLean specifically points to Adalbero of Reims' letter which thanks Theophano for her support, and asks for further favourable patronage, and then loops back around to associate this action with Otto, to further legitimise the action: MGH BDKz 2 ep.85, p.113.
[60] Leyser, *Communications and Power*, p.203.

facet that Theophano had brought with her when she travelled to the West.

Conclusion

Overall, for being one of the first women of the Byzantine imperial family to marry and move outside of the Byzantine sphere into a new dynastic, royal family, Theophano's short-term impact was remarkable. She was the best represented of the Ottonian women in terms of physical imagery: her image was widespread in the Holy Roman Empire, usually within an ecclesiastical setting, and thus would have been accessible to a wider public; this was, no doubt, intentional and reflects the wider context of the itinerant Ottonian court.

Despite underlining that Theophano did not transmit 'Byzantinising styles' to the Holy Roman Empire, I would argue that her presence within the imperial system, as a Byzantine princess, did play an important part in how they presented themselves. She was represented in Byzantine regalia, with traditional titles of *imperatrix* and *augusta*, and in locations of ecclesiastical importance that were geographically diverse. She was also portrayed in non-Byzantine regalia, as a western queen, in positions and contexts of piety. This was reflected in her public activities of patronage and interventions, recorded on charters. Theophano's image was carefully curated and spread to link with the traditional imperial past, showcase their piety, and create a unified image of a ruling family, with her husband and later with her son. Through her image, the Holy Roman Empire continued to use the signifiers of the imperial past, and competitively display their power as the inheritors of the Roman Empire, to the detriment of the smaller polities around them and, arguably, even in competition with the Byzantine Empire.

Chapter Eight: Zoe Porphyrogennete

Zoe Porphyrogennete was in a position of power for most of the later years of her long life. Born in c.978 to Helena and Constantine VIII (1025-8) while he was junior co-emperor with his brother, Basil II (976-1025), she became known as Zoe Porphyrogennete, and was a desirable candidate for a marriage alliance, especially due to the lack of male heirs.[1] In 1002, Zoe travelled to the Holy Roman Empire to marry Otto III, who had however died unexpectedly before she arrived.[2] She was sent back to Constantinople, and no more was heard of her in contemporary sources until first her uncle, and then her father died. No provisions had been made for her, or for her younger sister, Psellos tells us, and only when her father began to feel mortally ill did he marry her to a suitable candidate from the Senate, and she became the *augusta* in 1028.[3] By this time, Zoe must have been nearing fifty years of age, and would therefore have been unlikely to produce an heir. Because of their tendency towards early deaths, Zoe married three different men and adopted a son – all to ensure that there was an emperor who was in some way linked to the Macedonian line. Zoe died as *augusta* still in 1050 and, after her last husband died, was eventually succeeded by Theodora in 1055, who reigned by herself until 1056.

There were several candidates that were considered for the eleventh-century case study; in this period, as can be seen from the sheer amount of

[1] However Psellos, the main source that we have for the reigns of Zoe and her relations, did not assign either Theodora or Zoe the title 'Porphyrogennete', but does later refer to the Macedonian House as a whole as the 'Porphyrogennetoi'.
[2] *Liber gest.*, I, xiii. The Archbishop Arnulf II of Milan was sent to Constantinople by Otto III in 1001, where he was successful in negotiating a bride for Otto.
[3] Psellos, 2.10, pp.58-9. Skylitzes suggests that Romanos was not even the first choice, was unwilling, and that Constantine was desperate to marry one of his daughters off before he died: Skylitzes, 17.3, pp.352-3.

literature, elite women were not the invisible group that they could appear to be in earlier centuries.[4] Theodora Porphyrogennete certainly merits a mention here; she was the only woman in the eleventh century to rule on her own behalf – not as a regent for her children, or as the wife of an emperor. Her image usually appears alongside her sister and later co-empress, Zoe, but she also had a spate of coins minted during her reign in 1055-1056 (fig.2.29a-b). The famous gold seal of Theodora from the Dumbarton Oaks Collection was likely created during that short period.[5]

Another possibility was Eudokia Makrembolitissa, whose changes in status – through her first marriage, her time as regent for her two sons, and her second marriage of convenience – was clearly reflected in her representations on the coinage of the period (fig.2.30a-b). As discussed in the previous chapter, it is unlikely that Eudokia, and her husband Romanos, appeared in that famous ivory, though she and her first husband, Constantine X Doukas (1059-67), alongside their two sons, do appear in an illuminated manuscript (fig.2.31).[6] Eudokia and Constantine also appear on an eight-sided reliquary of Saint Demetrios, being blessed by Christ (fig.2.32).[7] Maria of Alania was the first foreign bride married to a *porphyrogennetos* who produced a male heir, and was consistently involved in court politics until after the accession of the Komnenoi

[4] There are many individual articles, but the most inclusive works are: Hill, *Imperial Women;* a third of the women examined are from the eleventh century in Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*; L. Garland (ed.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience 800-1200* (Aldershot, 2006). Specific examples such as Anna Komnene have inspired several works: T. Gouma-Peterson, *Anna Komnene and her Times* (London & New York, NY, 2000); P. Buckley, *The* Alexiad *of Anna Komnene: Artistic Strategy in the Making of a Myth* (Cambridge, 2014); L. Neville, *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian* (New York, NY, 2016).
[5] This is in the Dumbarton Oaks seal collection, inv. BZS.1961.20
[6] See Chapter Seven: Theophano, for discussion on the ivory, and Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, 'Eudokia Makrembolitissa', pp.305-25; Cutler, 'Date and Significance', pp.605-10; Parani, 'The Romanos Ivory', pp.15-28. For the manuscript, Par.gr.922, see Spatharakis, *Portraits*, pp.102-6. The two sons depicted were Michael and Constantine.
[7] I. Kalavrezou, cat. 38, in Mathews 'Religious Organisation', pp.77-8.

in 1081; her image was used on coinage – both with her first husband, Michael VII Doukas (1071-78; fig.2.33a), and her second husband, Nikephoros III Botaniates (1078-81; fig.2.33b) – and in an illuminated manuscript, again alongside her husband, though it has been suggested that the images were clearly changed from a representation of Michael to Nikephoros (fig.2.34).[8]

The Komnenoi had very visible female members in their family, both in terms of physical representation and activities such as patronage, ongoing into the twelfth century. As described in the *Alexiad,* Anna Dalassene was a powerful figure during the reign of her son, Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118), instrumental in the usurpation of the previous emperor and often acting as ruler when Alexios was on campaign.[9] Though her seals are numerous (fig.2.35a-b), and unlike earlier women, consisted of a few different types, there are no examples on which her image appears, and she was not represented with imperial titles, thereby making Anna unsuitable for this case study.[10] The last empress of the eleventh century, Eirene Doukaina, the wife of Alexios I Komnenos, appeared on both seals (fig.2.36) and coins (fig.2.37); her image was used in the rare *trachy* coin type, together with Alexios and John II Komnenos, which celebrated his accession to the position of co-emperor in 1092.[11]

However, Zoe Porphyrogennete was in a position of imperial power for many years, and was the key, similarly to Aelia Ariadne over six hundred years

---

[8] Spatharakis, *Portraits*, pp.107-18. The illumination in question belongs to Coislin 79, fol. 1v.
[9] *Alexiad,* III.6-8, pp.91-5.
[10] Anna's seals were inscribed with her name and positions, both nun and mother of the empress, but she did not have any imperial titles. As the wife of the *kouropalates,* John Komnenos, she used the Virgin Orans and Child on the obverse of her seals, followed by her name and title, *protokouropalatissa*; Zacos & Veglery, *Seals,* cat.2695a; and there is an example in the Dumbarton Oaks seal collection, inv. BZS.1947.2.1116.
[11] P. Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA, 1982), p.215. Her seals consist of Christ on the obverse, with a half-length figure of Eirene in full imperial regalia on the reverse; Zacos & Veglery, *Seals*, cat.103a; *DOS VI*, cat.89.2, inv. BZS.1955.1.4349

earlier, to the accession to power of four men – her husbands, Romanos III Argyros (1028-34), Michael IV the Paphlagonian (1034-41) and Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-55), as well as her adopted son, Michael V Kalaphates (1041-42). Her enduring popularity with the people, as well as that of her sister, is also an interesting aspect to consider; sent into exile by Michael V, a mob soon appeared on Michael's doorstep to demand her return, alongside Theodora, which led to his own downfall, being both blinded and tonsured. This led to the co-rule of Zoe and Theodora for some weeks in 1042, before Zoe married Constantine IX Monomachos; all three were then portrayed as co-rulers.

Perhaps Zoe's access to power is most easily showcased in the number of representations that can be clearly identified as her, in a variety of media. Her image appears on a small number of coins, mainly alongside her sister, a mosaic in Hagia Sophia, an illuminated manuscript, in a enamel panel of the so-called 'Monomachos Crown' kept in Hungary, the miniatures of the Madrid Skylitzes, and a rare example of a female layperson on an enamel disc, which can now be found in the treasury of San Marco, Venice – likely brought back with other treasures from Constantinople after the Fourth Crusade and the sack of Constantinople in 1204. Both of the main texts for this period – Skylitzes' *Synopsis* and Psellos' *Chronographia* – devote many pages to the sisters though not, of course, as many as on their male counterparts. Overall, the sheer visibility of the portraiture of Zoe, as well as her position within the imperial hierarchy – and her representational positioning – for much of the eleventh century make her an ideal candidate for this study.

8.1 Numismatic Imagery

Zoe's image, surprisingly, is found on coins only a few times, despite being the locus for imperial power for nearly a quarter of a century. During her short reign with Theodora in 1042, there was a single type of *histamena* issued that bore their image on the reverse and the Virgin Orans, with the medallion of the Christ Child on the obverse (fig.2.38).[12] The regalia worn by both Zoe and Theodora is elaborate; they both wear the *loros*, now ubiquitous for rulers in this period, and crowns with both multiple pinnacles and *prependoulia,* though no mounted crosses.[13] Zoe is depicted grasping the *labarum* above Theodora - her name is also first in the inscription, and she is placed in the position of honour, the right hand side of God, all of which come together to formulate her intended position at the top of the imperial hierarchy.

This also appears to be the first time that the *labarum* was held by an empress – previously, rods were usually cross-topped sceptres or the patriarchal cross.[14] The *labarum*, the standard used by Constantine the Great, became popular again in the ninth century as part of the system of imperial iconography, and was often used by emperors to denote military, religious and political triumphs; any association with Constantine, the now pseudo-legendary emperor was certainly also a positive.[15] This, again, portrays the office of the

---

[12] *DOC III.II*, cat.1. This coin type may be mirrored in a damaged seal, which would make it Zoe's only sigillographic appearance. It is currently in the Dumbarton Oaks seal collection, inv. BZS.1955.1.4333.

[13] This is certainly a change from previous *augustae* – from Eirene in 780 until Zoe in 1028, all of the women represented numismatically had crosses in the middle of their pinnacled crowns.

[14] There is a long line of use, which begins with the imperial couple coins of the sixth century, through to all types of the Eirene coins (fig.2.3a-b), the Theodora, Thekla and Michael coins (fig.2.5), Eudokia Ingerina (fig.2.14), and Zoe Karbonopsina (fig.2.6) (who is different in one instance; instead of the *loros*, she wears the *chlamys*).

[15] Parani, *Reconstructing Reality,* pp.32-3. As has been discussed already in this work, the 'New Constantine and Helena' appellation was certainly sought after, and can be seen in texts from the fifth century until at least the ninth.

empress within a context of imperial victory, and is also associating her rule with that of Constantine the Great.

The positioning of the sisters in this coin type is very similar to the positioning of the brother co-emperors, Basil II and Constantine VIII, their uncle and father – Basil and Constantine usually hold the patriarchal cross, though there are rare examples of the *labarum* being held.[16] As this co-operative rule of Zoe and Theodora was only to last for a few weeks, the surviving examples are understandably rare.[17] Considering, however, that there are no surviving coins for the rule of Michael V Kalaphates, whose reign lasted for over four months, it is notable that there were any coins of Zoe and Theodora at all. Perhaps there was an eagerness to mint new coinage to help solidify their hold on imperial rule; the co-rule of sisters was without precedence, after all.

8.1.1 The Virgin Mary on Coinage

The inclusion of divine imagery on this coin type, and also later that from the sole reign of Theodora, is also very similar to that found on the *miliaresion* of Basil II; though it is the bust of Christ that appears on the gold coinage, the Virgin Mary and Christ Child is used on the silver.[18] Thus, the use of the Virgin Mary on this coin type, and Theodora's later coinage, could be a continuation of the types produced under their immediate relatives, Basil II.

[16] *DOC III.II,* cat.10., for the rare *labarum* type
[17] *DOC III.II,* cat.1.
[18] Virgin Mary: *DOC III.II,* cat.3. Christ: *DOC III.II,* cat.1a.1-2.14. The first type of Theodora's gold coinage shows her being crowned by the Virgin Mary on the reverse, and a full-length Christ on the obverse. The silver coinage has the Virgin Orans on the obverse, and an inscription on the reverse: *QKE ROHQEI QEODQRA DECPOINH THPORFV POGENN TW*, labelling Theodora as both *despoina* and a *porphyrogennete.*

It has been suggested that the inclusion of Marian figural iconography on coinage was a sign of instability when it was first introduced; that Leo VI introduced the Virgin Mary on to his coinage, Penna argues, shows his desire to 'strengthen his dynasty' after the problems that came along with his fourth marriage to Zoe Karbonopsina, his union with whom had produced a son and heir.[19] The image of Christ, of course, had first appeared on coins several centuries earlier briefly with Justinian II's coins, and then again in the reign of Michael III, during Theodora's regency.[20] Representations of the Virgin had been included on seals since the sixth century; an early example is the seal of 'the imperial Xenon' of an anonymous imperial couple, argued to be Justin II and Sophia, who have a representation of the Virgin Mary between them (fig.2.8), and the more easily identifiable seals of Maurice, which had the Virgin Mary on the obverse.[21]

After the use of the Virgin Mary on the coins of Leo VI, the usurpers Nikephoros II Phokas and John I Tzimiskes also used the image of the Virgin on the reverse of their coinage, with Christ on the obverse, depicted holding the cross with the former, and crowning the latter.[22] This was also a motif adopted by the emperors married to Zoe: a full-length Virgin Mary crowns Romanos III on his gold coinage and a full-length Virgin and Child appear on the obverse of his silver; later in her reign, a full-length Virgin Orans appears on the obverse

[19] Penna, 'The Mother of God', p.210. Penna also mentions that the Virgin Mary could have been introduced due to his equally scandalous second marriage to Zoe Zaoutzania (he repudiated his previous wife, Theophano, and sent her to a monastery), but thinks this is the less likely scenario.
[20] For Christ coins during the regency, see *DOC III.I,* cat.2.1-2.6; and during Michael's sole reign: *DOC III.II*, cat.3.1-3.6.
[21] Zacos & Veglery, *Seals*, cat.29, suggest Justin II and Sophia, through numismatic comparison; there is also a version in the Dumbarton Oaks seal collection, inv. BZS 1958.106.5394. For the Maurice types, see *DOS VI*, cat.9.4, inv. BZS.1958.106.496.
[22] Nikephoros: *DOC III.II*, cat.4.1-5.4; John: *DOC III.II*, cat.1a-6c.

of Constantine IX's silver coins.[23] Therefore, by using the *labarum*, associating themselves with the strong rule of certainly Constantine and perhaps Basil II, and the image of the Virgin Mary, it is likely that this coin type is conveying a message of security, and of victory, for the empire under their rule.

8.1.2 Christ Antiphonetes

It was also argued by Grierson that there were further coin types minted sparsely with the image of only Zoe on them. One such coin, a small, base metal coin, of which there is only one example, is kept in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul, described as a 'pattern' coin.[24] On the reverse is Zoe in full imperial regalia, quite similar to the coin type shared with Theodora, but holding a sceptre and *globus cruciger* instead of the *labarum*, and Christ Antiphonetes, 'the guarantor' on the obverse. Although we are unsure when this coin type might have been minted, Zoe has long been associated with this Christ type; Psellos described her as making 'an image of Jesus… little figure, embellished with bright metal' which was capable of predicting the future by changing colour - this would seem to be more of a criticism than anything else, however.[25] She was also thought by a thirteenth-century chronicle to have founded and been buried in the Church of Christ Antiphonetes.[26] As 'the guarantor', perhaps this Christ type echoed the messages of safety and security

[23] Romanos III Agyros: *DOC III.II,* cat.1a.1-1d.11 (gold), 3a.1-3a.4 (silver); Constantine IX Monomachos: *DOC III.II*, cat.7.a.1-7b.3.
[24] Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage*, p.199.
[25] Psellos, 6.66-68, pp.188-9. For discussion on this excerpt and Psellos' purpose in writing this, see M. Mavroudi, 'Licit and Illicit Divination', in V. Dasen & J.-M. Spieser (eds.), *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* (Florence, 2014), pp.431-60.
[26] Μεσαιωνική βιβλιοθήκη, ed. K. N. Sathas, *Bibliotheca graeca medii aevi*, 7 vols (Venice & Paris, 1872-94): Sathas, 7:163.3-5; *Alexiad*, VI.3, p.157

given by the Zoe and Theodora coins: Zoe is endorsed by Christ, who guarantees both her reign and its success.

8.2 Wall Decoration

The mosaic in Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, is Zoe's most famous appearance (fig.2.39).[27] It is located on the east wall of the south gallery, raised above eye level. Her nimbate image appears on the left of the seated Christ, with Constantine on their right, in the position of honour. Above Zoe's head is the inscription, 'ZWH H EYCEBECTATH AYΓOYCTA', 'Zoe, most pious *augusta*'. Unlike other iterations of the Byzantine imperial couple, Constantine's titles are not the mirror of Zoe's, and he is labelled *autokrator* and *basileus* of the Romans, with a notably fuller inscription series. Both Zoe and Constantine are in imperial regalia; Zoe wears the *loros,* and is crowned. She also offers a contract roll to Christ, in the pose of a donor. Constantine is shown similarly, but with the *apokombion* – a small bag tied with a ribbon in which the emperor carried around money to distribute to the church – offering it to Christ. This first appears within the literary record in the *Book of Ceremonies*, wherein the emperor, during a feast day, would place the purse upon the altar.[28] Evidently this mosaic therefore has strong connotations with imperial largesse and philanthropy, as well as piety and divine approval.

While the coins of Zoe were of the imperial sisters or, possibly, by herself, most of their other images include reference to her last husband, Constantine

[27] Hill points out that Zoe is often not included in descriptions, or naming, of this panel – she uses the relatively recent example of Rowena Loverance's catalogue, *Byzantium*, of which the photograph does not show Zoe's image: Hill, *Imperial Women*, pp.1-2. While this may seem inconsequential, I have noted this reflected in popular culture: in the popular game, *Rise of the Tomb Raider* (2015), the faces of Constantine and Christ are used repeatedly, but nowhere do we see Zoe. This certainly has an impact on public reception – and, for a female-centred game, should certainly have made an appearance.
[28] *BOC I,* R76, 22-23.

IX Monomachos. His family name of Monomachos could translate to 'one who fights alone' or, literally, 'fighting in single combat'.[29] There is, however, little evidence to suggest, with the exception of a few sigillographic examples that include an image of the military saint, George, on the obverse, that the Monomachos were a military family.[30] During his reign, it should be kept in mind that Zoe and Theodora were Constantine's co-rulers up until 1050 with Zoe's death, after which Theodora continued on as empress. Contemporary writers also mention a certain Maria Skleraina, who was brought to the court with Constantine IX and was given much preferential treatment and titles by him – though she did not rule as a member of the imperial family as Theodora, suggests Skylitzes, would not stand for it.[31] What becomes obvious in this panel is that, as Zoe's third husband, Constantine was not the first emperor to be portrayed in this mosaic.

On examining the areas around the heads of the two imperial figures and the Constantine inscription, there is clear evidence of amendments, suggesting that there were two phases to the figural representation of this mosaic.[32] It is largely acknowledged that while Zoe's identity stayed the same, her head changed position; the emperor, on the other hand, had his identity changed

[29] *ODB*, 'Monomachos'.
[30] *ODB*, 'Monomachos'. Sigilliographic examples from both a Pothos Monomachos and a Constantine Monomachos have Saint George on the obverse. It has been suggested that this specific seal could have belonged to Constantine IX before he became emperor, as he was first a judge in the theme of Hellas - Skylitzes, 21.1, p.398 – an administrative position which is hinted at by this seal; Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection BZS.1958.106.1436. & possibly BZS.1951.31.5.1006. The iconography of the two Monomachoi are somewhat different however – on the former's, Saint George holds a martyr's cross, whilst on the latter's, he holds a shield and spear.
[31] Skylitzes, 21.7, p.409.
[32] Cormack makes the point that the changes would not have been so visible in the Byzantine period as they would have been covered with plaster: Cormack, 'Interpreting Mosaics', p.142. The figure of Christ was also amended.

from Zoe's first husband, Romanos III Argyros, to that of Constantine.[33] It has been suggested that this mosaic initially came about after Romanos' one-time donation of a large sum of money and the increase of the revenue to the church by 80 pounds of gold: Kalavrezou argues that this was in response to the disapproval over the irregularity of their marriage, owing to the circumstances of the quick divorce of his wife, and questions about consanguinity.[34]

Following his predecessors' example, the second phase of the mosaic was undertaken to acknowledge the large donation that Constantine made on the next uncanonical imperial marriage. This would be Zoe's third marriage and therefore, the donation, as convincingly argued by Kalavrezou, was in response to the following backlash, and to appease the patriarch who refused to marry them.[35] While the two imperial figures are clearly in poses of donation, it has been suggested previously that this was not, however, an imperially-sponsored mosaic that indicated donations and general munificence, but instead a show of appreciation by grateful patriarchs.[36] Within this framework, Kalavrezou has suggested instead that the patriarch acknowledged the donation, not with a new mosaic, but rather by simply changing the sections of the old one, modifying the pose and gaze of the emperor to be more subservient to Christ.[37] While this is convincing, if this was a mode of critique, of visual polemic, then

---

[33] This was initially suggested in T. Whittemore, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report. Work Done in 1935-38: The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery* (Oxford, 1942), pp.60-2.
[34] I. Kalavrezou, 'Irregular Marriages in the Eleventh Century and the Zoe and Constantine Mosaic in Hagia Sophia', in A. E. Laiou & D. Simon (eds.), *Law and Society in Byzantium, 9th-12th Centuries* (Washington D.C., 1994), pp.241-60, pp.245-6: though there is no 'official' reaction from the church, the donation and the appearance of the mosaic indicate that the imperial couple were trying to solve an issue.
[35] I. Kalavrezou, 'Irregular Marriages', pp.253-9.
[36] Cormack debates the idea, but ultimately rejects it in R. Cormack, 'Interpreting the Mosaics of Saint Sophia at Istanbul', *Art History* 4 (1981), pp.131-49, pp.141-2.
[37] I. Kalavrezou, 'Irregular Marriages', pp.253-9. Zoe's position had to be amended too, as she could not be of a higher position than the emperor.

there would have been little need to give the emperor so many titles. It might seem more likely that the replacement was aimed at the erasure of the continual reminders of Zoe's marriages and uncanonical, unorthodox connotations, especially during important processions and feast days when Hagia Sophia was the focal point.[38]

The area in which the mosaic is situated, while relatively close in proximity to the altar, is notable. Unlike the San Vitale mosaics, which could be seen by much of the congregation arguably along gender lines, this mosaic was more likely to have had a smaller audience, despite its size, as it was located within, possibly, the imperial gallery.[39] This may have been to emphasis the resolution of any controversy – by both Romanos and Constantine – within the elite circle, who would have been the main audience for this kind of issue. While both emperor and empress are appropriately costumed and their joint reigns shown to be blessed of Christ, in a pious act of donation, there are some differences between the two. Despite Zoe's importance to the legitimacy of Constantine, we see that it is Constantine who maintains the more imperial position – though, that her presence was required, is still indicative of her role within the imperial hierarchy. Perhaps this is a reflection of her popularity and status;[40] Constantine is given more titles and greater accord because he needed to further identify himself as the legitimate emperor; Zoe, as the purple-born heir to the Macedonian dynasty, was under no such compunction.

---

[38] Cormack, 'Interpreting Mosaics', pp.143-5. That the two imperial figures are placed in subtly more subservient poses does not have to take away from this argument: if the patriarch was tasked with renewing the mosaic, he might have found it more appropriate for the couple to be positioned like so, or have wanted to add the subtle critique.
[39] Cormack, 'Interpreting Mosaics', p.141, suggests that this was part of an imperial gallery.
[40] In terms of popularity, Skylitzes records a riot by the people when they thought the imperial sisters were being deposed and replaced by Constantine's consort, Maria. Only the sisters' appearance calmed them down: Skylitzes, 21.7, pp.408-9.

8.3 Enamels

Representations of Zoe also appear in enamel form. Scholarly consensus is that the so-called 'Monomachos Crown' was given as a gift to an imperial lady of Hungary in the eleventh century by the Byzantine imperial family, if not by Constantine Monomachos himself.[41] It now consists of seven enamel plaques, which were fastened together at the back to form a crown (fig.2.41). The panels have an image of Constantine IX in the central plaque, with Zoe to his right and Theodora to his left. The three nimbate figures are appropriately represented in eleventh-century costume, crowned with *pendilia* and holding sceptres, though Constantine's is the *labarum*. While Zoe and Theodora are named and given the signifier and title of 'most pious *augusta*', Constantine has the title of *autokrator*. On Zoe's immediate right is the image of a woman dancing, her arms akimbo, and then the personification of Humility; on Theodora's left is another image of a female dancer and then the personification of Sincerity.[42]

---

[41] H. Maguire, cat.145, in R. G. Ousterhout, 'Secular Architecture', in H. C. Evans & W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York, NY, 1997), pp.192-216, pp.210-2. This is held in the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv.99/1860. However, there is some discussion as to whether this crown was actually a nineteenth-century forgery: see N. Oikonomidès, 'La couronne dite de Constantin Monomaque', *TM* 12 (1994), pp.241-62. This, however, has since been convincingly questioned by Kiss, who examines Oikonomides' argument, inclusive of the crown's potential historicity, problematic concstruction, and errors in the inscription: E. Kiss, 'The State of Research on the Monomachos Crown and Some Further Thoughts', in O. Z. Pevny (ed.), *Perceptions of Byzantium and Its Neighbors (843-1261)* (New York, NY, 2000), pp.60-83. More recently, it has been suggested that instead of a crown, these enamels came together to form a ceremonial armilla or 'arm-crown', though I do not find this convincing: T. G. Dawson, 'The Monomachos Crown: Towards a Resolution', *BS* 19 (2009), pp.183-93.

[42] There has been much discussion on these female figures; the dancing women in particular have been examined in detail. I find the argument by Restle to be convincing – that these women are part of an imperial *adventus* (a later example seen in the ivory pyxis discussed in Chapter Twelve: Helena Dragaš) – and others have argued for the imagery as being borrowed from religious contexts (such as the Life of David) and, as expanded on by Maguire, that they are borrowings from Old Testament imagery and representing the Graces, highlighted by their halos, acting as metaphors for imperial victory: Maguire, cat.145, in Ousterhout, 'Secular Architecture', p.210. For the *adventus* argument, see M. Restle, 'Höfische Kunst in Konstantinopel in der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit', in R. Lauer & H.

Zoe and Theodora are mirror images of each other, with the exception of Zoe's feet – hers are closer to the central figure of Constantine, whereas Theodora's are to the right and thus further away. As Zoe is also on the emperor's right, perhaps this is indicative of her position of honour.

Both of the empresses are looking at Constantine, whereas Constantine's gaze is fixed to his left, to Theodora. This is very unusual; unless there is a divine presence, the gaze of the emperor is usually forward-facing, whereas others may direct their gaze elsewhere, one of the many ways in which an emperor may show his status, even within the imperial hierarchy.[43] This is very much in line with Byzantine conventions; the image of the emperor here can be usefully compared to that of the emperor in the Crown of Hungary for example, where the purposeful gaze becomes even more surprising with its subtle dynamic (fig.2.44). In the Crown of Hungary, Michael VII Doukas is looking forward, as is his younger son, Constantine Doukas.[44] King Geza I of Hungary, however – who was the intended recipient and would likely have worn this crown, as his successors certainly did – has his gaze directed towards Constantine, clearly showing his subservience to the emperor overall, but also to the junior emperor.[45] This is in line with the rest of the imagery on the crown, though the positioning is perhaps of most interest. The front of the crown replicated the positioning of the rulers on the back, and thus Christ was mirrored by the emperor, with the subservient angels reflecting the junior

G. Majer (eds.), *Höfische Kultur in Südosteuropa: Bericht der Kolloquien der Südosteuropa–Kommission 1988 bis 1990* (Göttingen, 1994), pp.26-31.

[43] See Brubaker, 'Gender and Gesture', pp.47-70, for further discussion on this.

[44] Due to its importance in the political and royal memory of Hungary, this crown is now displayed in the Hungarian Parliament Building.

[45] L. Brubaker, 'Gesture in Byzantium', in M. J. Braddick (ed.), *The Politics of Gesture: Historical Perspectives* (Oxford, 2009), pp.36-56, pp.36-8.

emperor and the king: even their associations with holy figures indicated their hierarchical order. Perhaps by his use of gaze, he was indicating, due to the lack of suitable heirs of his own, that Theodora was the next heir to imperial power, reiterating a strong, imperial line of succession for a foreign dignitary. Much has been written on the purpose of these panels and how they may have been worn: while the majority of scholars agree that it would have been worn as a diadem, Kiss makes the suggestion that it was for a non-imperial recipient, based on the lack of consistency in the titulature.[46] Perhaps then, much like the Crown of Hungary, the ensemble was a gift, and the enamels' implicit messaging of the status of the Byzantine imperial household was aimed at reiterating and emphasising that status to a foreign royal or, at least, aristocratic audience.

8.3.1 A Venetian Disc

Zoe is also represented on a small enamel disc (fig.2.43), now found in the treasury of San Marco, Venice, displayed among a small collection of other small enamel plaques.[47] The representation is similar stylistically and

[46] Maguire, cat.145, in Ousterhout, 'Secular Architecture', p.210; Kiss, 'State of Research', p.67, for the discussion of the title, *autokrator*, as appearing by itself. This is an argument against the suggestion that this crown was awarded to Constantine Monomachos as part of a ceremonial entry into the city on his victorious return: Kiss, 'State of Research', p.76. See R. Cormack, 'But is it Art?', in J. Shepard & S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers form the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, SPBS 1 (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 219-36, for the crown as an example of a surviving diplomatic gift.

[47] San Marco treasury, Venice, inv.N.93-108. I have found minimal references for this enamel, and would like to thank Brad Hostetler for his kind help and expertise in this matter. Frazer mentions it in passing, in comparison to the style of the figural enamels on the bookcover with Christ and the Virgin *orans*: M. E. Frazer, cat.14, in M. E. Frazer, 'Byzantine Enamels and Goldsmith Work', in D. Buckton, with C. Entwistle & R. Prior (eds.), *The Treasury of San Marco* (Milan, 1984), pp.109-206, p.155. It is also noted in A. Grabar, 'Opere bizantine', in H. R. Hahnloser, *et al* (eds.), *Il Tesoro e il Museo* (Florence, 1971), cat.100, p.84.

iconographically to that of the Monomachos crown: Zoe wears the *loros*, is crowned and is nimbate. There are some differences, however. The crown is pinnacled, instead of the flatter diadem style, and she wears no *pendilia* – instead there are stands of hair, or perhaps plaits. She is also titled as 'Zoe, *augusta*', and is thus in keeping with the titulature of her other portrayals explored so far, with the exception of the signifier 'most pious'.

Grabar has ascertained that, as there are no holes in the enamel, this could not have been part of the Pala d'Oro.[48] He does however link it stylistically with the Christ enamel disc in the same collection; Zoe also indicates the presence of other imagery by her sideways gaze, signifying the superiority in hierarchy of another presence – perhaps the emperor or the image of Christ.[49] I would argue that this plaque was likely part of a series, which would decorate another object. The series may have belonged to a crown, similar to the votive crown of Leo VI.[50] Circle plaques of comparable size and iconography line the outside of this crown: Leo has all the accoutrements of the office, but he is not titled as emperor – only his name is given. A major difference also is the background of the disc, which is green enamel, as opposed to Zoe's plain gold. In terms of style, the Zoe plaque is more akin to the holy figures on a sardonyx chalice.[51] Thus, again, we see Zoe represented in the traditional mode of her office, through costume, title and medium. Her image

[48] Grabar, 'Opere bizantine', cat.100, p.84. For discussion on the Pala d'Oro, see Chapter Nine: Piroška-Eirene.
[49] Grabar, 'Opere bizantine', cat.101, p.84.
[50] San Marco treasury, Venice, inv.N.92. This item is now an amalgamation of the votive crown, architectural elements, and a statuette of the Madonna; it has been renamed as 'the Grotto of the Virgin'.
[51] San Marco treasury, Venice, inv.N.49. It should be noted that there are also some empty spaces for plaques on this cup, on both the upper and lower register, though there is already a Christ plaque.

used in conjunction with an item like a crown or a cup, gives a reciprocal extra element of status to the object used and her representation.

8.3.2 The Khakhuli Triptych

Styled similarly to the enamels that have gone before, Zoe and Theodora's images have been identified in three medallions with the Khakhuli Triptych.[52] Within these medallions, we see two empresses blessed by the Virgin Mary (fig.2.53a), one empress greeting the John the Baptist (fig.2.53b), and another empress greeting an angel (fig.2.53c). Due to the dual representation of empresses – appropriately dressed in eleventh-century costume, with the *thorakion* as particularly distinct – these figures have been identified as Zoe and Theodora, though there is no accompanying inscription to identify them without doubt. Kotsis, who recently made this identification, has argued that the positioning and subject matter are unique: no other Byzantine depiction represents an empress alone with John the Baptist or an angel, or the double coronation, which is how she reads the Virgin Mary medallion.[53] As we have seen numismatically, it had become usual from the mid-tenth century for the Virgin Mary to appear with or be shown blessing the emperor; and the Virgin does appear on the coins of Theodora. This Virgin medallion, however, has gone a step further in positioning and action. Kotsis sees layers of meaning within this triptych: first, as the divinely-sanctioned rule of Theodora and Zoe, as well as a reminder of their legitimacy as the last of the Macedonian dynasty, and as

[52] This triptych is now in the Georgian National Museum.
[53] K. Kotsis, 'Mothers of the Empire: Empresses Zoe and Theodora on a Byzantine Medallion Cycle', *Medieval Feminist Forum* 48.1 (2012), pp.5-96, pp.5-9.

a visualisation of the heavenly court reflected in the imperial one.[54] The triptych also functions, Kotsis argues, as the two empresses being likened and identified with not only the Virgin Mary, but also as Christ, enunciating their elevated position, but also possibly because neither 'ever bore a child, [they] were portrayed as Mothers of the Byzantine Empire'.[55]

While Kotsis does discuss how these medallions may have arrived in Georgia, she does not come to any firm conclusions – she brings up the possibility of a trade in enamels, as well as diplomatic gifts.[56] However, Kotsis' work does not discuss another enamel at the apex of the triptych, which names and portrays Maria of Alania and Michael VII Doukas.[57] I would argue therefore that this is more likely to represent Maria of Alania and Eudokia Makrembolitissa than Zoe and Theodora. The *thorakion* is usually considered to be a later eleventh-century style, rather than during the reign of Zoe – indeed, the other enamel representations of Zoe do not show her in a *thorakion*, and neither does the Hagia Sophia mosaic, though this is damaged towards the

[54] Kotsis, 'Mothers of the Empire', pp.10, 60-1. Kotsis argues that this triptych can be seen as a reflection of the turbulent period of the coup and short, dual reign of the sisters, and so can subsequently be dated to 1042.
[55] Kotsis, 'Mothers of the Empire', pp.10, 61. Kotsis does not fully explain how their identification with Christ intertwines with that of the concept of 'mother of the Byzantines'; this is largely discussed in concert with the comparison to the Virgin Mary.
[56] Kotsis, 'Mothers of the Empire', p.10. It has been noted that, during this period, it is difficult to distinguish local products from imports, due to how strong Byzantine influence was and their close links: S. Peter Cowe, 'The Georgians', in H. C. Evans & W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York, NY, 1997), pp.336-48, pp.340-1. It does seem likely, however, that this is Byzantine.
[57] This is noted by H. C. Evans, 'Imperial Aspirations: Armenian Cilicia and Byzantium in the Thirteenth Century', in A. Eastmond (ed.), *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Warwick, March 1999*, SPBS 9 (Aldershot, 2001), pp.243-58, pp.247-8, who compares this image with those of the Cilician court, who were looking to 'present [themselves] within the Byzantine tradition of imperial portraiture'.

bottom.[58] The cross on the *thorakion* is found on later imagery too.[59] As pointed out by Cutler's examination of the titulature found on the Romanos-Eudokia ivory, there was room within the hierarchy for more than one *augusta* and specifically gives the example of the *augustae* Maria of Alania and Eudokia Makrembolitissa.[60]

The subtle hierarchy within the 'coronation' medallion may also give us some further clues. One empress is indicated as superior; she is in the position of honour and slightly larger. However, whereas both of the empresses turn their gazes to the Virgin, the Virgin's gaze points towards the smaller, junior empress. Perhaps, then, the 'senior' empress was Eudokia and the 'junior' was Maria, and this triptych was a gift on Maria of Alania's marriage and ascension to the Byzantine throne, to her own royal family in Georgia. It was meant to celebrate these major life events, but also her new status; her ascension approved and indicated by the Virgin's presence and gaze. The innovations of the empresses' portrayals may also be explained in this way; they may not have been suitable for a Byzantine court, but may have been more appropriate for a Georgian context.

While I find the identifications of the empresses and the latter part of her argument to be questionable, the former assertions of Kotsis on the representations of the empresses are certainly borne out within the triptych. That the enamels are not titled – unusual for enamels generally – shows that

[58] Theodora and Zoe are shown in the *thorakion* in the illuminated manuscript Sinait.gr.364, which will be discussed in the next section.
[59] See the enamel of Piroška-Eirene, now in the Pala d'Oro (fig.2.49). This is an issue, however, as the enamel of Maria at the top of the triptych has no cross on her *thorakion*.
[60] Cutler, 'The Romanos Ivory', p.606. Cutler uses the example of Maria of Alania's marriage and ascension to the throne (represented by the Coislin miniature (fig.2.34)), which occurred at while Eudokia Makrembolitissa was still being represented as the *basilissa* of the Romans alongside her husband (seen on the eight-domed reliquary (fig.2.32)).

although this may have been within a context where the identity of the imperial figures was obvious, it is the office of the empress that is being represented and celebrated here. It is shown in its full capacity as the legitimate, imperial ruler, pious and divinely sanctioned, as well as underlining its role within the mundane, imperial court the mirrors that of the heavenly one.

8.4 Miniatures

A copy of the Homilies of St John Chrysostom displays two full-page miniatures; that of the evangelist Matthew, who hands his gospel to St John Chrysostom and an imperial portrait, identified by the titles as Constantine IX Monomachos in the centre, Zoe to his right, and Theodora to his left (fig.2.40).[61] All three are nimbate, crowned, holding sceptres and wearing the *loros*, with the sisters bearing the *thorakion* augmentation. As possibly seen in the small enamel disc of Zoe, instead of *pendilia,* the empresses' hair is styled in braids in this miniature. This may be the beginning of a new trend: as we will see in the next chapter, Piroška-Eirene also wears her hair in this way in her mosaic in Hagia Sophia (fig.2.47), as well as female figures in the Komnenian manuscript, *BAV* urb.gr.2 (fig.2.51).

The accompanying text titles Constantine as both *autokrator* and *basileus*, similar to his depiction in the Hagia Sophia mosaic with the additional emphatic signifier of 'ΠΙΣΤΟC', 'faithful'. Whereas, Theodora and Zoe share the title of *augusta* and *porphyrogennete*, Zoe has the emphatic signifier of 'ΕΥCΕΒΕCΤΑΤΗ', 'most pious', again, as seen in the Hagia Sophia mosaic.

[61] Codex Sinait.gr.364, fol 2v-3r. Spatharakis, *Portrait*, pp.99-102.

Further text lines the foliate border of the miniature: 'As the one Pantokrator of the Trinity, O Saviour, may You protect the shining trinity of earthly sovereigns, the mightiest ruler Monomachos and the couple of common blood, the offshoot of the purple'.[62] The text closely links together the three imperial figures. It draws upon the familial bloodline of Zoe and Theodora as imperial, as 'purple' and weaves it together with the mighty rule of Constantine. This is clearly in an attempt to legitimise his reign.

Zoe's senior status above her sister is hinted at via her taller crown, secondary position of honour, and additional signifier. Although there are three crowns that descend from holy figures – the central one for Constantine Monomachos of course comes from Christ – the direction of the crown-bearing angels still seems to be aimed at Constantine; the audiences' eye is drawn in that direction. Thus, though Zoe may be noted as above her sister in the imperial hierarchy, it is Constantine who is the main focus of this miniature. Zoe and Theodora – grouped together with him through the inscription and lower within the visual hierarchy – act as imperial signifiers and in the capacity of boosting his legitimacy and his status, signalling his right to be emperor.

8.4.1 Madrid Skylitzes Manuscript

Zoe's image can also be found in the Madrid Skylitzes manuscript, the images working alongside the history of Skylitzes to tell the story. She is represented in several key instances: during her wedding to Michael IV the Paphlagonian (fig.2.42a); the forceful tonsuring of her sister, Theodora (fig.2.42b); Zoe telling the eunuch Sgouritzes to poison the eunuch and brother

[62] Translations from Spatharakis, *Portraits*, p.100.

of her husband Michael IV, John Orphanotrophos (fig.2.42c); Zoe's attempt to calm the mob alongside the return of her sister (fig.2.24d); and her inclusion with Theodora, Skleraina and another woman in a 'royal box' (fig.2.42e), are a few of the examples.[63] However, the Madrid Skylitzes manuscript, although the only surviving Greek history with such extensive miniatures, should not always be considered as helpful to discussion on representations. As Boeck has convincingly argued in her examination of this manuscript, alongside that of the illuminated Vatican Manasses manuscript, the miniatures therein offer visualisations that belonged to appropriating agents, rather than a reflection of Byzantine society.[64]

Perhaps all that can be usefully said of these miniatures is that there are some indications of how twelfth-century Sicily, if that is indeed where this manuscript was created, viewed Byzantine empresses; it may also reflect the views of women in power generally for the rulers of Sicily. For Zoe, she is often represented as wearing similar imperial regalia to her husbands – both Michael IV and Constantine IX Monomachos – which perhaps could be indicative of her perceived position. With the exception of the miniature with Maria Skleraina, Theodora is depicted as a nun, regardless of her return from the monastery. When the women are in the royal box (fig.2.42e), the sisters can be distinguished from Maria and her companion through differences in costume, particularly the crown; the signifiers of distinction are still being brought into play by the creators of this manuscript. One of the imperial figures seems to have a bigger, more elaborate crown: perhaps this is Zoe as the more senior

[63] Respectively, these are as follows: MS.graecus.vitr.26-2, fol.206v, fol.204r, fol.212r, fol.220v, fol.227v.
[64] E. Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illuminated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses* (New York, 2015).

empress, as described within the text of the manuscript. Despite there being some issues with the visual expression, clearly the creators of this manuscript were aware of differentiations in power and was important enough to be signified accordingly.

Conclusion

Overall, Zoe's image can be seen in a plethora of material, largely consistent in costuming, title and company. She was always nimbate, in the imperial costume of the *loros*, crown and sceptre, titled by *augusta* and occasional emphatic signifiers, and was consistently represented in luxury media that reflected her rank. As a key member of the imperial hierarchy and longstanding Macedonian dynasty, and as the connection between her husbands and the imperial family, Zoe was the legitimising factor for their reigns. Though this is not born out in the imagery of either of the Michaels, and only one augmented mosaic for Romanos, it is certainly true of Constantine.

I would argue that the consistent use of Zoe's, and Theodora's intermittently, image by Constantine was part of a general trend of using the image of the office of the empress competitively. The imperial 'brand', with all of its constituent elements, occasionally including her *porphyrogennete* status, as well as the popularity of Zoe was being constructed and used to solidify Constantine's rule, through a series of portraits. We can also see this within the dual rule of Theodora and Zoe; despite ruling for a short time, the issue of their image, particularly numismatically, shows their concern for the maintenance of their rule and competition with rival power bases.

Chapter Nine: Piroška-Eirene

The end of the twelfth century was marked by increasing uncertainty, with the tumultuous and short-lived reigns of the latter rulers of the Komnenid dynasty and that of the Angelids, which, of course, concluded with the catastrophic events of the Fourth Crusade. Perhaps these factors had some effect on either the likelihood of the survival of images or how frequently female members of the imperial family were portrayed; regardless, there are few of these types of images left extant.

One possibility is that of Maria of Antioch, who was the daughter of Raymond of Poitiers – later of Antioch, as one of the Crusader kings – and who became the second wife of Manuel I Komnenos (1143-80) and subsequently was the regent for her son Alexios II (1180-83) after Manuel's death. After her execution, ordered by the usurper Andronikos I Komnenos (1183-85), Andronikos is recorded as having destroyed all the images of Maria in the city, which, although an interesting late example of *damnatio memoriae*, does not lend itself well to this series of case studies.[1] There is, however, a sole surviving example of her identifiable image in the illuminated manuscript Vat.gr.1176, where she is portrayed alongside her husband, Manuel (fig.2.45).[2] Agnes-Anna, a foreign bride sent to marry Alexios II by the arrangement of her father, Louis VII of France (1137-80), and Manuel I Komnenos, was also considered for this

[1] Choniates, p.183. Such an extensive policy of *damnatio memoriae* dates back to at least the Roman Republic; see Chapter One: Flavia Iulia Helena, where I discuss the case of Fausta. There is a difference here, however, in that the images were at first altered to make Maria appear much older and 'shrivelled', thus damaging her reputation for beauty and, Choniates claims, for piety. Andronikos then later destroyed and replaced them with images of himself and his new wife, the young Agnes-Anna. Somewhat ironically, he also suffered from *damnatio memoriae* at the hands an enraged mob after his fall from the imperial dignity: Choniates, pp.192-3

[2] Spatharakis, *Portrait*, pp.208-10.

case study: in the manuscript, Vat.gr.1851, it is likely that she is represented several times as a young girl in the process of getting married to the heir of the Byzantine Empire, Alexios (fig.2.45).[3] The illuminations closely follow the narrative of the text, suggesting that this manuscript was intended as being instructive for the young girl, and now us, on the introduction of a foreign bride to her new Byzantine family, what she should expect on her arrival, and what they would expect from her, providing us with much more information on this process. It has been argued that this manuscript was commissioned for Agnes-Anna by Maria of Antioch, her soon to be mother-in-law, and sent before arrival.[4]

Although discussed in the previous chapter, Eirene Doukaina played an active role in the twelfth century, as well as the eleventh; her image appeared on seals (fig.2.36) and rare issues of coins (fig.2.37). However, she was not selected for this period because of the limited amount of coinage produced, and also because of Piroška-Eirene's varied media, which seemed more conducive for this case study. Eirene's daughter, Anna Komnene was an interesting character and the only prolific female writer and historian, and represented both herself and several female members of her family within her history, *The Alexiad*. One might argue that we could see her own representation through her writing, and her own agency through it.[5] However, as there are no extant

[3] C. J. Hilsdale, 'Constructing a Byzantine *augusta*: A Greek Book for a French Bride', *ArtBull* 87.3 (2005), pp.456-83, p.459. Hilsdale highlights the issues with dating this particular manuscript, but does argue, on both stylistic and titular grounds, that it fits contextually within the late twelfth century, making Agnes-Anna the most suitable recipient of this gift. See C. Hennessy, 'A Child Bride and Her Representation in the Vatican Epithalamion, cod. Gr. 1851', *BMGS* 30.2 (2006), pp.115-50, for other possible identifications.
[4] C. J. Hilsdale, 'Constructing a Byzantine *augusta*', p.477.
[5] See L. Neville, *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian* (New York, NY, 2016), for a full discussion on Anna and her work.

images of Anna, she does not fall under the remit of this study. Keeping with this theme of literary interests, the *sebastokratorissa* Eirene might also have been used for this study, and her patterns of patronage examined, yet she also has no extant imagery.[6] The previous two women were also not in possession of the appropriate titles and do not occupy the role of the office of the empress, despite their close relationship to emperors, and so do not fall under the remit of this study.

Thus, for this case study, I have selected Piroška-Eirene who, although not represented in coinage – which was one of the main media examined in this thesis – was portrayed in a mosaic in Hagia Sophia, seals, and an enamel in San Marco, Venice and the front manuscript illumination of Barb.gr.372 and in Urb.gr.2. Piroška-Eirene does appear in the literary record produced within her lifetime too, including epitaphs on her death, and there has been a recent trend of examining what Piroška-Eirene brought to the political sphere at Constantinople in scholarly works, both as a foreign-born bride and as an empress who was part of an imperial family that was well known for their active and visible female members.[7]

Piroška-Eirene was sole empress from 1118 until her death in 1134. She was the daughter of Adelaide of Swabia and Ladislaus I, whose brother was Geza I, famous for his appearance on the Holy Crown of Hungary. Interestingly, Piroška-Eirene is directly descended from Theophano, our tenth-century case

---

[6] See Jeffreys, E. M. 'The *Sevastokratorissa* Eirene as Literary Patroness: The Monk Iakovos', *JÖB* 32.3 (1982), pp.63-71, for further discussion.
[7] For recent work, see M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019); and for her involvement in the foundation of the Pantokrator, in V. Dimitropoulou, 'Imperial Women Founders and Refounders in Komnenian Constantinople', in M. Mullett (ed.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast, 2007), pp.87-106; S. Kotzabassi (ed.), *The Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople* (Berlin, 2013).

study, through the royal houses of Poland and then Hungary.[8] Her marriage to John II Komnenos was arranged through the political machinations of her father's cousin and recently-made king of Hungary, Coleman (1095-1116), and Alexios I. It has been suggested that this marriage alliance was created in an attempt to create a barrier between Byzantine-held lands and the powers of both the Normans and the Venetians; this alliance became important to the 'empire's dominance' over south-eastern Europe for several decades.[9] Piroška thus married John II in 1104 and changed her name to Eirene.

As John became co-emperor with Alexios, signalled by the special issue of a *trachy* type from c.1092, Piroška-Eirene may have been able to claim the title of *augusta* from their marriage, though there is no evidence of her doing so.[10] Her husband, John II Komnenos became sole emperor on the death of his father in 1118, though not without some competition from her sister-in-law, Anna Komnene, whose revolt, championing her husband, Nikephoros Bryennios, as the legitimate emperor, is related to us in the account of Niketas Choniates.[11] Her union with John II produced at least eight children, all of

[8] Piroska's father, Ladislaus I, was the son of Béla and Adelaide-Richeza, who was the daughter of Mieszko II Lambert of Poland and Richeza of Lotharinga, who was the daughter of Lotharingia and Matilda, the third daughter of Theophano and Otto II. As we will see in 9.5, Piroška-Eirene was noted for her illustrious forebears and celebrated as western royalty.

[9] V. Stanković, 'John II Komnenos before the Year 1118', in A. Bucossi & A. Rodriguez Suarez (eds.), *John II Komnenos, Emperor of Byzantium: In the Shadow of the Father and the Son* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2016), pp.11-21, p.17. Hill notes that the silence of the sources on her role as anything but being active in patronage and philanthropy is suspicious; due to her position, she must have 'played a part in the international scene': Hill, *Imperial Women*, p.94.

[10] Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage*, p.215, for John's accession. As I have discussed previously there does seem to be space for some overlap: see 8.3.2: The Khakhuli Triptych. Hill suggests that after Alexios had died (1118), Eirene Doukaina Komnene was addressed as *despoina* or *basilissa* because the title of *augusta* had gone to Piroška-Eirene: Hill, *Imperial Women,* p.104.

[11] Choniates, 6. This is not mentioned in Anna's account of John's accession. It has been argued that the prologue of Anna's will alludes to her involvement in the usurpation and that she was following her parent's wishes as a dutiful daughter: Riehle, 'Authorship and Gender', pp.254-8. For further discussion on this piece of Anna's writing and its self-

whom lived into adulthood, including the next emperor, Manuel I Komnenos. She was also involved in patronising the Monastery of the Pantokrator, which survives to the present day as the mosque, Zeyrek Camii. Her representations include that of seals, enamels and in miniatures, as well as being honoured in verse.[12] Indeed, it may be the success of this particular marriage, either due to her own reputation or the benefits which the Byzantines extracted from such an alliance, which resulted in all bar one of Piroška-Eirene's successors before the Fourth Crusade being of foreign extraction. Towards the end of her life, Piroška-Eirene became a nun, taking the monastic name, Xene, and was celebrated as a saint after her death, the only female saint known from the twelfth century, further speaking to her successful tenure and popularity.[13] Thus, Piroška-Eirene is of interest to this case study due to her portraiture in a variety of media, and positioning, as a foreign-born bride – by this time becoming the norm –, a dutiful mother, empress, and as a patron.

---

referential and autobiographical style, see S. Papaioannou, 'Anna Komnene's Will', in D. Sullivan, E. A. Fisher & S. Papaioannou (eds.), *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honour of Alice-Mary Talbot* (Leiden, 2011), pp.99-121.

[12] John Kinnamos, Ἐπιτομὴ, ed. A. Meineke, CSHB 13 (Bonn, 1836), trans. C. M. Brand, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus,* Records of Civilisation: Sources and Studies 95 (New York, NY, 1976): Kinnamos, 3, p.17. Hill also recorded that Prodromos had written a short epitaph for her and mentioned her husband's epitaph – her main attributes were that of 'being of good birth and family… [and] a fertile child-bearer': Hill, *Imperial Women,* p.83.

[13] Ousterhout suggests that this promotion took place during the reign of Manuel, imitating that of the ninth-century empress, Theophano, based in the Holy Apostles, and boosting the imperial family by association: R. Ousterhout, 'Piroska and the Pantokrator: Reassessing the Architectural Evidence', in M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), pp.225-59, p.254. We also have her *synaxarion* entry: ed. S. Kotzabassi, in S. Kotzabassi (ed.), *The Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople* (Berlin & Boston, MA, 2013), pp.170-5; trans. P. Magdalino, 'The Foundation of the Pantokrator Monastery in its Urban Setting', in S. Kotzabassi (ed.), *The Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople* (Berlin & Boston, MA, 2013), pp.50-5.

For brevity's sake, I will refer to her only by her first two names, rather than Piroška-Eirene-Xene.

9.1 Sigillography

Though Piroska-Eirene was not represented numismatically, her image may have been represented sigillographically. There are at least four seal types which have been linked to the Eirenes in this period; one type is certainly related to Eirene Doukaina (fig.2.36), the first Komnenian empress, married to Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118). The difference can be seen through the inclusion of Eirene's family name, Doukaina, in the inscription on the reverse of her seals.[14] For the most part, however, the other seals simply refer to an 'Eirene' usually with the title of *augusta*.

The seal which most likely portrays Piroška-Eirene has Christ on the obverse, on a high back throne, with his feet on a dais, blessing with his right hand and holding the Gospels with his left.[15] There is a full-length figure of the empress on the reverse, her right hand held before her and the left holding a trefoil sceptre; the inscription around her image reads, 'Εἰρὴνη ἡ εὐσεβεστὰτη αὐγοὐστα', 'Eirene, most pious augusta'. This inscription matches that of the Hagia Sophia mosaic, including the omicron and upsilon ligature which only becomes common after the 1130s.[16] The seated Christ is also similar to that found on the coins of both Alexios I and John II, further indicating that this is Piroška-Eirene. It taps into the conventions of portraying the empress with imperial signifiers, including titulature, as well as pious ones. This is especially relevant, in terms of representation, as this is how she would have sealed her correspondence to a range of audiences. That her seals exist also indicate a

[14] *DOS VI,* cat.89.1-2, inv. BZS.1995.1.4348; BZS.1995.1.4349 are clear examples Although the seal BZS.1995.1.4561 includes Doukaina in the inscription, it does not include a title. Therefore, it would be unlikely that this was this empress' seal, especially as it portrays the Virgin Orans on the obverse; all of the other seal types display Christ.
[15] *DOS VI,* cat.90.2, inv. BZS.1951.31.5.43
[16] *DOS VI,* cat.90.2, inv. BZS.1951.31.5.43; Zacos & Veglery, *Seals*, cat.106.

public-facing role for Piroška-Eirene, necessitating the creation and use of seals on which her status is overtly displayed through imperial titles and dress.

9.2 Wall Decoration

The mosaic in Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, is Piroška-Eirene's most famous appearance (fig.2.47). It is located on the east wall of the south gallery, raised above eye level, and was placed next to that of the Zoe-Constantine panel, though with a windowed space between. Her nimbate image appears on the left of the Virgin and Christ Child, with John II on their right, in the position of honour. Above Piroška-Eirene's head is the inscription, 'EIPHNH H EYCEBECTATH AYΓOYCTA', 'Eirene, most pious *augusta*'. Unlike the other Byzantine imperial couple, John and Piroška-Eirene's son is portrayed with them, indicating him as their heir. Both Piroška-Eirene and John are in imperial regalia; Piroška-Eirene wears the *loros,* with *thorakion,* and is crowned. Instead of long *pendilia* however, she has long plaits and tripartite earrings. Her crown has two layers of pearl-encrusted gold plaques with a larger central plaque: this follows on from crown developments in the eleventh century in to much larger forms.[17] Again, mirroring Zoe, she also offers a contract roll to Christ, in the pose of a donor. John II is costumed similarly, following the trends of the late eleventh century, but mirroring Constantine in his offering of the *apokombion* to the holy figures in the centre. In close mirroring and associaition with the earlier panel, as well as the divine company they keep,

[17] V. Rousseau, 'Emblem of an Empire: The Development of the Byzantine Empress's Crown', *Al-Masāq* 16 (2004), pp.5-14, p.11.

and the donor positions, this panel is indicating piety and divine approval of the imperial couple, potentially mirroring an actual event of a donation.

In his work on Byzantine donor portraits, Franses points out that these two mosaics are together 'less concerned with issues of personal salvation' and more with the sponsorship of the church: the imperial couples are not represented with any 'weakness' before the divine figures so taking away from their own authority; they are not made to seem like petitioners.[18] However, there are some differences between the two mosaics. John and Piroška-Eirene are more upright and frontal-facing than their predecessors, appearing more impassive so as their imperial 'demeanour is better maintained', but the gesture of their offering to the Virgin is more explicit: it conveys a difficult balancing act of 'degree[s] of power and piety'.[19] The mosaic also portrays their son, Alexios, and heir in this context as well; his junior status is indicated by his beardless face. Though this mosaic imbues these positive imperial traits on Alexios too, emphasising his role within the imperial family and reinforcing their status as a whole, his positioning also ensures that he is shown as subservient to the senior emperor.

The hairstyle of the empress in this mosaic is quite different from earlier representations of imperial women, suggestive of an 'otherness' of Piroška-Eirene, especially when compared to the almost completely covered Zoe Porphyrogennete mere feet away. Is this somehow related to her background outside of the Byzantine Empire? However, when put into context with other

[18] R. Franses, *Donor Portraits in Byzantine Art: The Vicissitudes of Contact between Human and Divine* (Cambridge, 2018), pp.28-30.
[19] Franses, *Donor Portraits*, pp.30-1. Franses suggests that the change in divine figure (from Christ to the Virgin) is what makes this change possible: the imperial couple can have a more 'dominating' presence when the image of Christ is not present (and thus the problem of the figures of two supreme powers, mundane and divine, is mitigated).

images appearing in this period, it may not be so unusual. Instances from the *Tetraevangelion,* Urb.gr.2. (fig.2.51), the imperial illumination of Barb.gr.372 (fig.2.50), and the image of Maria of Antioch from Vat.gr.1176 (fig.2.45) share a similar taste in hairstyles. This can also be tracked back to the manuscript illumination of Maria of Alania in Coislin 79 (fig.2.34), whose hairstyle is clearly the precursor to this, as well as the representations of Zoe in enamel (fig.2.43) and miniature (fig.2.40) form. Of course, it could also be argued that Piroška-Eirene's appearance in the mosaic was also the inspiration for the personifications of Mercy and Justice at Christ's side, as well as that of one of anthropomorphised initials, below an illumination of the Evangelist Matthew in the same manuscript.[20] While some have argued that the red hair and braids on the mosaic are an attempt at presenting Piroška-Eirene's foreign status, as can be seen here, the braids at least were part of changing trends in hairstyle that slowly evolved over the course of the eleventh century and into the twelfth.[21]

9.3 Miniatures

Images of Piroška-Eirene may also be found in two miniature manuscripts, that of the *Tetraevangelion,* Urb.gr.2*,* as mentioned, and Barb.gr.372, though these identifications are far from fixed. In Barb.gr.372 fol.5r, we see an enthroned Christ blessing the imperial family: the emperor is in the position of honour on Christ's right, while the son and heir is in the

[20] Spatharakis, *Portrait*, pp.79-81.
[21] C. Mielke, 'The Many Faces of Piroska-Eirene of Hungary in Visual and Material Culture', in M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), pp.153-72, pp. 155-6; Hill, *Imperial Women,* p.89-90. The discussion on ideal Komnenian beauty traits is certainly convincing.

middle – his junior position indicated by his smaller size and lack of facial hair – and the empress is in the position of least honour on Christ's left. There has been some debate as to the identity of this family, ranging across the Komnenians.[22] However, Spatharakis made a convincing argument that this image was initially of Constantine X, Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the co-emperor Michael – and was in fact a manuscript for the young emperor, seen here holding a book – and was reworked in the Palaiologan period.[23] The image of the empress does bear a close resemblance to other contemporary images of Piroška-Eirene; the red hair, shown and divided into two sections on each side of her head, and the style of clothing such as the *thorakion*. While this may be a suitable representation for an eleventh- or twelfth-century empress, the representation of the emperor could suggest a much later date, particularly in the style of the beard and crown, which holds similarities to the Palaiologan emperors (see fig.3.22 for comparison).

If this was indeed the family of Piroška-Eirene, this miniature is certainly in keeping with her other representations which show a concern for the legitimacy of their heir, ensuring that he is visible where possible, as will be seen in later discussion, as well as a deep-seated interest in the portrayal of their piety, particularly resonating here as an image within a gospel manuscript. This identification does seem unlikely, however, and, as shown by Spatharakis, tells us more about Palaiologan fashion and their reuse of manuscripts: however, it might not be too far of a stretch to suggest that the

[22] Wald initially suggested Alexios I Komnenos, Eirene Doukaina and John: E. De Wald, 'The Comnenian Portraits in the Barberini Psalter', *Hesperia* 13.1 (1944), pp.78-86, pp.82-4.
[23] Spatharakis, *Portrait*, pp.46-8. He noted the Palaiologan style of script, as well as the faces being redrawn alongside other features.

illuminator based his touch-up on Piroška-Eirene's image in the mosaic in Hagia Sophia.

The *Tetraevangelion* miniature on fol.19v displays an enthroned Christ blessing two male imperial figures; on either side of Christ are two, supposedly, imperial female figures (fig.2.51). The inscriptions on either side of the male figures tell the audience that Christ is blessing John, in the position of honour on Christ's right, and Alexios on Christ's left; the two female figures are named as 'Mercy' and 'Justice'. The manuscript is addressed to an imperial audience and is thought to have been produced in celebration of the coronation of Alexios as John's co-emperor.[24] The female figures are strikingly reminiscent of the representation of Piroška-Eirene in the mosaic in Hagia Sophia: the same crown, same red plaited style of hair, though the colouring of the dress is different, and the figures are much more active than the impassive, frontal stance of the mosaic figure. We should not understand these figures as being Piroška-Eirene herself, but instead as two allegorical figures of Justice and Mercy who, in this positioning, represented how the emperor wanted to be seen.[25] As suggested by Mielke, there could be double layer of meaning here: the two figures while ostensibly being the Justice and Mercy, might also reflect the roles of the empress as intercessors.[26] Thus, while neither of these figures can specifically be identified as Piroška-Eirene, they do tell us about the possible roles that the figure of the empress might fill, and where it was

[24] Mielke, 'Many Faces of Piroska-Eirene of Hungary', p.160-1.
[25] R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (London, 1985), pp.196-7.
[26] Mielke, 'Many Faces of Piroska-Eirene of Hungary', p.161. He also suggests that the figure in purple, as a courtly colour, could be Piroška-Eirene, while the other might be Alexios' young wife.

appropriate to do so; a private manuscript, meant for a small audience, could play with expectations to create layers of meaning.

9.4 Enamel

There is an image of Piroška-Eirene in enamel, originating in Constantinople, which can now be found in the Pala d'Oro in San Marco, Venice (fig.2.49).[27] In this image, we can see Eirene, named and titled as 'the most pious *augusta*'. She is nimbate, carries a sceptre, and wears a two-layered, pinnacled crown, as well as the *thorakion*, with a cross within it. While this is certainly in keeping with Byzantine conventions of the representation of an eleventh- to twelfth-century empress, what may strike us as odd is her positioning. The Pala d'Oro is a massive structure filled with rows of saints and other holy figures.[28] While it is not unusual for an emperor and empress to be represented in such exalted company – and Piroška-Eirene is below a large representation of Christ Pantokrator, and to the left of the Virgin Mary – where the emperor should be, on the right of the Virgin in the position of honour, is instead a representation of the Venetian doge, Ordelaffo Falier.[29] He is garbed in the costume of a Byzantine emperor and, by his positioning and associations, especially with the use of the image of Piroška-Eirene, is clearly trying to tap

[27] There is some debate as to which Eirene this panel refers to, as it could also be Eirene Doukaina. See Nicol for the argument that the Eirene and Falier panels were originally Alexios I Komnenos and Eirene Doukaina, based on the evidence that Falier commissioned some of the enamels for San Marco in 1105: D. M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge, 1988), pp.197-8. On the other hand, Bettini argues that these panels originally represented Bertha-Eirene and Manuel I Komnenos: S. Bettini, 'Venice, the Pala d'Oro, and Constantinople', in D. Buckton, with C. Entwistle & R. Prior (eds.), *The Treasury of San Marco* (Milan, 1984), pp.35-64, pp.48-54.
[28] Bettini, 'Venice, the Pala d'Oro, and Constantinople', pp.35-40.
[29] For more discussion on this plaque, see D. Buckton & J. Osborne, 'The Enamel of Doge Ordelaffo Falier on the Pala d'Oro in Venice', *Gesta* 39.1 (2000), pp.43-9.

into those traditional signifiers of Byzantine power, to show himself as a legitimate and pious ruler, on par with the emperors of Byzantium.

What may strike us as particularly puzzling is why it was she who was inserted into this altar piece in the most important church of that time in a powerful Italian city-state. Cutler has shown that there were several different ways in which Byzantine goods made it to Italy – diplomatic gifts, trade, and the collecting habits of Italian elites.[30] However, it is clear from the historical record that the Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople certainly had an effect on the removal of precious goods from the city, and subsequent transferral to the west. In fact, one such source tells us that the Westerners were aware of the goods that were kept in the monastery that Piroška-Eirene had patronised: …he began to plan how he might secure some portion of the relics… he took with him one of his two chaplains and went to a church [The Pantokrator] which was held in great reverence because in it the mother [Piroška-Eirene] of the most famous emperor Manuel had a noble grave, which seemed of importance to the Greeks, but ours held for naught… many pilgrims broke into this church and some were eagerly engaged in stealing gold and silver, others precious stones…'.[31]

It would seem, then, that at least part of the enamels of the Pala d'Oro were taken from the Pantokrator and transplanted into San Marco.[32] Perhaps

[30] Cutler, 'Loot to Scholarship', pp.237-67.
[31] Gunther, *Historia Constantinopolitana*, ch. xix, in Riant: Exuviae, vol. 104 ff.
[32] Bettini, 'Venice, Pala d'Oro', p.35, claims that the Pantokrator, the richest monastery in Constantinople at this time, was totally despoiled by the crusaders. Mielke relates the tale of Byzantine visitors to San Marco in the fifteenth century who knew that the enamels had originated from the Pantokrator rather than the Hagia Sophia as their Venetian hosts had told them, though the long time period between the two events would suggest that this is unlikely: Mielke, 'Many Faces of Piroska-Eirene of Hungary', p.163-4, particularly footnote 44.

this enamel, and others, had been initially been used in the Pantokrator, the place of Piroška-Eirene's patronage. As well as the looting of the monastery, there is the fame of Manuel, with whom she was clearly still remembered as being the mother of, to consider. This may have had an impact on her selection. The crusaders brought other items back from this monastery to San Marco. In the treasury there is a reliquary cross, which would have held relics of the True Cross; the inscription that it holds identifies its patron as Piroška-Eirene.[33] As an elite woman and as an empress, Piroška-Eirene was part of a network of elite women who patronised and refounded monasteries in the Komnenian period.[34] Her efforts with the Pantokrator monastery, especially with its reputation as a huge and wealthy monastery, can certainly attest to the growth of her reputation by the visible and status-enhancing political act, as will be discussed in the next section.

9.5 Literary Representations

The historical record also provides some detail as to the political activities, particularly the patronage, of Piroška-Eirene. The chance survival of a letter from Conrad III (1093-1152), the Holy Roman emperor, to Piroška-Eirene, showcases how an empress might be able to act as mediator between powerful male rulers, in this case Conrad and her husband.[35] As discussed in

[33] San Marco Basilica, Venice, inv.N Santuario, 57. There are some scholars who attribute this cross to a donation of Piroška-Eirene's mother-in-law, Eirene Doukaina: Kiss, 'State of Research', p.66.
[34] Dimitropoulou, 'Imperial Women Founders and Refounders', pp.87-106. Dimitropoulou discusses the large amount of patronage by elite women in the Komnenian period, pointing out their access to economic resources, but also indicated their high social status and power.
[35] Hill, *Imperial Women*, p.94. Imperial women as mediators has been discussed in other sections of this thesis, including in 10.3.4 in Chapter Ten: Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.

the case study of Theophano, exogamic marriages were initially rare within the Byzantine imperial family, and one might suspect that negative connotations would follow the accession of a western outsider to the position of Byzantine empress. But, as explored by Lau, Piroška-Eirene was represented and celebrated as the 'empress of the West', as were subsequent foreign-born empresses who followed her, within imperial rhetoric; Lau argues that Piroška-Eirene should not be dismissed as 'simply devoting herself to philanthropy and raising children', but be treated as a political figure in her own right.[36]

While perhaps not a visible literary patron as other aristocratic women were in the Komnenian period, Piroška-Eirene does make other appearances in the literary record. Nicholas Kallikles, the court physician and poet, wrote two epitaphs concerning her. While the first was dedicated to her and has been shown as a 'short, personal, family-orientated, and yet deeply spiritual epitaph', the second funerary poem, which was dedicated to John and focused on his deeds as *autokrator*, represented Piroška-Eirene as being equal partners with John in life and in imperial status.[37] As we will see, this fits with the description of Piroška-Eirene made by John in the Pantokrator *typikon*. In Kallikles' epitaphs, we see both sides of Piroška-Eirene: the devoted and pious mother – though still enshrined in the language of imperial rhetoric – and the

[36] M. Lau, 'Piroska-Eirene, First Western Empress of Byzantium: Power and Perception', in M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), pp.143-51, p.150.

[37] R. Shlyakhtin, "A New Mixture of Two Powers': Nicholas Kallikles and Theodore Prodromos on Empress Eirene', in M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), pp.291-300, pp.291, 297. Here the relevant passage from John's epitaph is translated as 'You come there together with your wife/Who took part in your life and your crown': Nicholas Kallikles, *On the Tomb of the Despina*, ed. R. Romano, *Carmi* (Naples, 1980), pp.93-9; trans. C.-N. Gaşpar, *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), Appendix 3: Kallikles, pp.93-9.

empress who shared in ruling as part of the imperial couple: the dichotomy of a woman in power in Byzantium shown and mediated in two poems.

Theodore Prodromos, another twelfth-century poet based in the Constantinopolitan court, also composed an epitaph on Piroška-Eirene's death. This epitaph is differently framed from those of Kallikles, though with the same thematic areas covered: Prodromos' focus was on Piroška-Eirene as an empress and on imperial glory; she was a foreigner with illustrious antecedents, a fertile wife, and witness and supporter of her imperial husband and children.[38] Thus her role as the empress is key here, and the emphasis is on the celebration of the continued imperial family.

9.5.1 Patronage

As well as the mosaic representation, which suggests donations to Hagia Sophia, Piroška-Eirene is mentioned in connection with the foundation of the Pantokrator monastery, though the sources vary on her level of responsibility. Though only a short excerpt from his work, Kinnamos gives full credit of the construction of the Pantokrator Monastery, 'among the most outstanding in beauty and size', to Piroška-Eirene alone, which is echoed by her entry in the *synaxarion*, yet Choniates does not mention her in this context at all.[39] While there has been some doubts in the past, the recent scholarly consensus is that

[38] Shlyakhtin, "A New Mixture of Two Powers", pp.298-9; Theodore Prodromos, *A Funeral Verse for the Blessed Empress of the Romans,* kyra *Eirene*, ed. W. Hörandner, *Historische Gedichte* Wiener Byzantinistische Studien 11 (Vienna, 1974), pp.229-30; trans. G. Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars* (Budapest, 1970), p.76: Prodromos, pp.229-30.
[39] *Synax.PE.* p.50. Kinnamos 3, p.17. Kinnamos does represent Piroška-Eirene as being provided for by the emperor however, indicating that though the choice of what to do with it was still hers, it was still the resources of the emperor that were being used. This can be compared with Theodora in the next chapter, who is known to have funded projects with resources from own estates.

Piroška-Eirene was at least the co-founder of the Pantokrator, with some arguing for her as the driving force behind its construction: as Jeffreys has astutely argued, the attribution of her name to this role 'compete[s] with so many pressures for its suppression that it must represent a reality'.[40]

John compiled a lengthy *typikon* for the Pantokrator. This is largely made use of in scholarly work because of the inclusion of details about and rules for the hospital that was part of the monastic complex, but it also included a section at the beginning wherein John discussed the recent death of Piroška-Eirene: 'Under [God's] guidance I built a new church dedicated to thine almighty wisdom… I offer thee that which is thine own, for through thy help I found someone to share its planning, construction, and completion, my partner and helper in life [i.e. Piroška-Eirene], though before the complete establishment of the task she left this world by thy mysterious decision and by her departure cut me apart and left me torn in two'.[41] As this was composed shortly after the death of Piroška-Eirene (1134), we may postulate that had she survived, she would also have been involved in, or responsible for, the composition of this *typikon*, as her direct predecessor, Eirene Doukaina was

[40] M. Jeffreys, 'Piroska and the Komnenian Dynasty', in M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), pp.97-119, p.109. Other recent scholarly work that recognises a joint effort by the imperial couple includes R. Ousterhout, 'Architecture and Patronage in the Age of John II', in A. Bucossi & A. Rodriguez Suarez (eds.), *John II Komnenos, Emperor of Byzantium: In the Shadow of the Father and the Son* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2016), pp.135-54, pp.136-9. Though the translation of the *typikon* does mention Piroška-Eirene, the emphasis is certainly on the actions of John.

[41] John II Komnenos, *Typikon: Pantokrator,* ed. P. Gautier, 'Le typikon du Christ Saveur Pantocrator', *REB* 32 (1974), pp.1-145; trans. R. Jordan, '*Pantokrator: Typikon* of Emperor John II Komnenos for the Monastery of Christ *Pantokrator* in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Two* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.725-81: *Pantokrator*, 1, p.738. Jeffreys also points out that, as John was often away on campaign, Piroška-Eirene may have been the more accessible of the two (though she too is recorded as travelling with the army), and would have had more opportunity to plan and check on the progress of the construction: Jeffreys, 'Piroska and the Komnenian Dynasty', pp.109-11.

known to have been with her own monastic foundation, the convent of the Mother of God *Kecharitomene*, 'Full of Grace'.[42] John also seems to be giving much of the credit of its construction to Piroška-Eirene, at every point in the process, until she died. This certainly indicates her own agency in performing this act of patronage, and the appropriateness of the role she was undertaking, as well as the grief of John at losing his partner.

The Pantokrator was made up of three large interconnected churches, each built at different phases during the life of Piroška-Eirene and John.[43] Though little remains of the initial decoration, we are aware that it would have been well decorated with mosaics in the vaults and stained glass; the marble walls and opus sectile floors still remain and, as shown by Ousterhout, the rinceaux of terrestrial scenes reflect connotations of Komnenian rulership and earthly power, reflecting the power and status of the imperial couple.[44] As has already been discussed, there would have been much in the way of portable wealth, and it is probable that the enamel now in Pala d'Oro, San Marco, initially decorated the Pantokrator and represented the empress. As well as showcasing their wealth and status, it displayed the virtues of the imperial couple 'imitat[ing] the philanthropic god' as their *philanthropia* was particular evident through Pantokrator by its social work: Pantokrator was a highly visible

---

[42] Eirene Doukaina Komnene, *Typikon: Kecharitomene*, ed. P. Gautier, 'Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitôménè', *REB* 43 (1985), pp.5-165, pp.19-155; trans. R. Jordan, '*Kecharitomene: Typikon* of Empress Irene Doukaina Komnene for the Convent of the Mother of God *Kecharitomene* in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Two* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.649-724: *Kecharitomene.* This *typikon* also adds personal touches by making provisions for the founder's female relatives, *Kecharitomene*, 3-4, pp.669-71: Anna Komnene is known to have retired there after her husband, Nikephoros Bryennios, died (c.1136-7) to join Eirene: *Kecharitomene*, p.649. Eirene also discusses memorial services for the imperial family, as well as liturgical offerings for still living and deceased relatives: *Kecharitomene,* 71, pp.700-2; 34, pp.687-8.

[43] Ousterhout, 'Architecture and Patronage', p.135.

[44] Ousterhout, 'Architecture and Patronage', p.140-1. The stained glass was found in 'limited excavations' in the 1950s.

project, and enhanced the visibility of the patrons.[45] This complex then became a nodal point for their status, imperial power and piety within the cityscape of Constantinople.

Ousterhout argues that Piroška-Eirene was the initial driving force behind the first church and it was intended to be used as a burial place for the imperial couple, rather than as an imperial mausoleum for the whole family.[46] The subsequent growth of the complex over the following years may then indicate the changing needs of the imperial family, especially with the construction of the third church, the Theotokos Eleousa. This third church was open to the public and became part of public processions, with distributions of alms to the poor, and so the complex became a popular part of the religious life of the city, with a layered lay and monastic presence.[47] As well as an enhancement of their status in this world, the complex and community therein were asked to pray to intercede on behalf of specific members of the imperial family after death; the intercessory prayers of monastic communities were considered by patrons to be more effective than those who led secular, sinful lives.[48] In the *typikon*, it is insisted, to the point where it is repeated three times, that only Alexios – excluding his other siblings, even his own twin sister, Maria – was allowed to be buried in the same space as their parents; intercessory prayers are specified and emphasised for him.[49] Jeffreys argues that the expansion of the initial ecclesiastical complex to three churches was a

[45] V. Dimitropoulou, 'Giving Gifts to God: Aspects of Patronage in Byzantine Art', in L. James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium* (Chichester, 2010), pp.161-70, pp.165-6.
[46] Ousterhout, 'Architecture and Patronage', p.141.
[47] Jeffreys, 'Piroska and the Komnenian Dynasty', pp.112; Ousterhout, 'Architecture and Patronage', p.144.
[48] Dimitropoulou, 'Giving Gifts to God', p.164. *Pantokrator*, 31, p.738-9.
[49] *Kecharitomene* 32, p.755; 35, p.756; 44, p.759. The sections, however, are written not in an exclusionary manner, but the wish that John's son, Alexios, will be buried with him; the other siblings are passively excluded.

way of 'definitively separate[ing Alexios] from his siblings' and a show of support for the primacy of their heir, to insert him into the religious life and memory of the city.[50] This thereby complements the messaging of the mosaic in Hagia Sophia; of Piroška-Eirene and John II Komnenos as the pious, imperial couple, and also a reminder and safeguard of the position of their son, Alexios.

Conclusion

As with many of the other empresses in the Middle Byzantine period, Piroška-Eirene was depicted as pious and given all of the imperial signifiers that other empresses were accorded. She was also part of a much broader tradition of patronage during the Komnenian period, which became one of the most important centres in Constantinople, though she did not live to see it to fruition. Her image is also used to showcase the piety and legitimacy, not only of her husband and son in Hagia Sophia, but also in her panel in the Pala d'Oro in San Marco. We see then that the representation of the empresses was considered worthy of use outside the cityscape of Constantinople or even the empire, and found itself as a resilient tool for the portrayal of imperial power. What we also see within this reign is her agency in the political sphere, mentioned in Conrad's letter and clearly signified by her cofounding of the Pantokrator.

[50] Jeffreys, 'Piroska and the Komnenian Dynasty', pp.112-9. Jeffreys suggests that Piroška-Eirene's family background in Hungary, with their dynastic disputes between siblings that came to a head in the 1120s, was plausible cause for her own anxiety regarding the safety and accession of her son and subsequent expansion at Pantokrator.

Summary of the Representations of Middle Byzantine Empresses

Over the course of these five case studies, there was certainly one consistent theme that presented itself; that is, of course, the family. The empresses' relation to and legitimising influence on the imperial family can be seen throughout this period. After Eirene – though she was also represented numismatically with her son, and his paternal relatives, during her regency – there is a much clearer pattern of mother, father, and son; mother and sons; sisters and husband (though this suggests a much more unique convention); and the later explosion of the representation of the family relationship from the Komnenian period onwards. The office, itself, as seen through varied representational devices, becomes much more varied in terms of significance when comparing the empresses of the Middle Byzantine period to those of the Early Byzantine period.

It could be argued that we also see in this period a consolidation but also significant use of the representation of the empress; it would be represented in the appropriate manner to the office if it was important to do so. Thus, we see the changing faces of Zoe's husbands in the mosaic of Hagia Sophia, and the conveyance of legitimacy through the portraiture of Eudokia Ingerina with the sons that were produced by a union with the usurper and – if the sources are to be believed – murderer of the previous emperor.

In previous scholarship, it has been argued that the exogamic marriages of Byzantium in the tenth century onwards had a cultural effect on polities to the north and west of Byzantium, and that these princesses acted as vehicles for cultural transmission. This has been explored within the tenth-century case

study of Theophano, where it was suggested that this was probably not the case, and what we see in this this period was, in actual fact, an element of visual competition between rival empires, and not cultural exchange. I would argue, however, that this has a reactive effect in Constantinople; as more outside influences have come in, so the offices of the hierarchical structure within Byzantium, particularly the empresses, react defensively: they became more elaborate, more ceremonial. Perhaps this is why we find a didactic manuscript meant for a foreign-born princess from the twelfth century; it was not merely comforting – making a young girl aware of what to expect when she reached Constantinople – but was instructive in ensuring the office of the *augusta* continued with all of its ceremonial and costumed formality. It is with this in mind that we now turn to the next section of this thesis.

The Representations of Imperial Women of the Late Byzantine Empire

Chapter Ten: Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina

The thirteenth-century case study runs into some obvious difficulties from the beginning. After the sack of Constantinople in 1204 and the expulsion of the ruling families of Constantinople to the nascent centres of Nikaia, Trebizond, and Epiros, there are difficulties with both identifying appropriate imperial women and agreeing on the correct terminology – when is an empress not an empress? Does an imperial family need to be based in Constantinople for a female member to 'count' as an empress, or even as 'Byzantine'? To add to these problems, examples of eligible women of ruling families are consistently thin on the ground: there is little in the way of representations of women during the thirteenth century.

For instance, Theodora Petraliphaina, St Theodora of Arta, was considered for this case study; she had a *vita* written about her, from which we can glean much in terms of how the author wished to portray her.[1] Her image appeared on her tomb (fig.3.1) in the Church of Hagia Theodora, Arta, alongside her son, Nikephoros, flanked by the archangels and crowned by a *manus dei* – this in a church which she founded after the death of her husband.[2] Another

[1] A.-M. Talbot, 'The Life of St Theodora of Arta', in A.-M. Talbot (ed.) *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Washington D.C., 1996), pp.323-34, pp.324-5. Her husband and despot of Epiros, Michael II Komnenos Doukas (1231-c.1266), cast out Theodora and her infant son, Nikephoros, and she wandered the countryside for five years, without complaint, caring for her son and living off wild greens, despite her status as an empress. This appears to be the basis for her elevation to sainthood, and her hagiography was written in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century: *Life of St. Theodora of Arta,* BHG 1736, PG 127:903-8; trans. A.-M. Talbot (ed.) *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Washington D.C., 1996), pp.327-33: *VTheo.,* pp.331-3.

[2] S. Brooks, 'Sculpture and the Late Byzantine Tomb', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.95-115, pp.98-101. Here Brooks discussed the re-appearance of the human figure on sarcophagi, which had not been seen since the Early Byzantine period. Possible reasons ranged from outside influences (such as the Crusaders), the enduring interest in ancient styles, and inspiration being drawn from classicising figural sculpture of early Byzantium for the restoration of Constantinople.

imperial woman, Eirene Komnene Doukaina married into the Bulgarian royal family and became the empress of Bulgaria; it is possible that she was depicted in a fresco in Agioi Taxiarchai Mitropoleos, Kastoria (fig.3.2).[3] Even after the recapture of Constantinople and the re-establishment of the Byzantine Empire in 1261, the separate states formed during the thirteenth century could still be considered as independent but interlinked, with the exception of Nikaia. Thus in Trebizond, after Theodora Megale Komnene (1284-5) ousted her brother, she had coins minted in her name, bearing her image, as the empress (fig.3.3).[4] Theodora is one of the only female rulers of this late period who had her imagery on coins, yet her costume is somewhat problematic: the hat and robe are more akin to that of a twelfth-century noblewoman.[5] However, as is seen through the developments of the costume of the empress throughout the Palaiologian period, this does fit in the pattern and she could still be considered as viable for this study.

However, it is Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina who has been chosen for this case study, mainly because of the comparatively large amount of materials still extant for her tenure, but also owing to her position as empress of the reconquered city.[6] Born in c.1240, Theodora was part of both the Doukas and

---

[3] E. Drakopoulou, Kastoria: Art, Patronage, and Society', in J. Albani & E. Chalkia (eds.), *Heaven and Earth. Cities and Countryside in Byzantine Greece* (Athens, 2013), pp.114-25, pp.122-4. Eirene Komnene Doukaina was the maternal cousin of St Theodora of Arta.

[4] There are two types of coin, both silver *aspers* and base metal *folles*: Bendall, *An Introduction to the Coinage of the Empire of Trebizond* (London, 2015), p.50, cat. 47-8. The Barber collection features several of these *aspers*; I have specifically chosen BIFA ET.0118 for the clarity of the crown and dress. Her brother, John II Megas Komnenos (1280-97) returned to power around a year later.

[5] Earlier points of comparison include Anna Radini (Hagioi Anargyroi, Kastoria) and the miniatures of the noble women who greet the foreign-born princess (*BAV* Vat.gr.1851): Parani, *Reconstructing Reality*, pp.78-9, pl.83 & 84. The attached *pendilia* on the hat on the *aspers*, however, would suggest a closer relation to depictions of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina on her seals (fig.3.4-7).

[6] I have chosen to name Theodora as such due to the selection of names on her seals. These were used by Theodora and thus are the most likely indicators of what name she would

Vatatzes family: her parents were John Doukas and Eudokia Angelina, and her paternal grandfather was the *sebastokrator* Isaak Doukas Vatatzes, whose younger brother was John III Doukas Vatatzes (c.1221-54), ruler of Nikaia.[7] Theodora was probably orphaned while she was still in her adolescent years: John III adopted her, and made arrangements for her to marry Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1253, before his reconquest of the city. Theodora and Michael had seven children, with all but one living into adulthood, among whom was the next emperor, Andronikos II Palaiologos. She died in 1304, having outlived her husband by twenty-two years, and acted as dowager-empress throughout Andronikos' reign. The union with the Latin Church, which Michael VIII pursued during his reign, had become a deeply unpopular issue, and Theodora publicly recanted her belief in this unionist policy, at the beginning of Andronikos' reign.[8]

Unfortunately, although Theodora was a part of the group which began to rebuild Constantinople after the assumed negligence of the Latins, her physical image has not survived in many places, though the extant examples are indicative of both tradition and change in the empress' portraiture and positioning. There are some examples of extant seals – all of a similar type – and an illustrated copy, from a much later period, of what may have been a mosaic representation of her, alongside her family members, as well as a much-damaged fresco in St Mary in Apollonia, Albania. What we do have in larger quantities, however, are detailed records of her philanthropy and patronage

have used. Other options are provided by Talbot 'The Empress Theodora Palaiologina', p.295.

[7] Melichar, *Empresses of Late Byzantium*, pp.72-6, provides an overview of Theodora's background.

[8] Whether this was her own opinion or on behalf of her son is still up for debate. Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina', pp.297-8, discusses this issue and her relationship with Andronikos.

through the surviving *typika* of the Convent of the *Anargyroi* and the Convent of the *Lips*, both of which were revived under the same programme of rebuilding undertaken and encouraged in the reigns of Michael and Andronikos.[9] The pious reputation that she constructed for herself amongst her contemporaries – through her patronage, philanthropy, involvement in religious controversies, emphasis on her family both past and present, and her representations – has also come down to the modern day, preserved in funeral monodies and other literature from that time. As well as her patronage of two monasteries and a church, Theodora was known as a literary patron, as Theodore Metochites described in his monody in her honour.[10]

Although agency is particularly difficult to discern, arguably Theodora did build this reputation for herself through a concentrated effort; even a modern audience can see her own actions in the construction and positioning of her memory, particularly through her *typika*. We can also interpret this element of her portrayal as competitive agency: representations of her, through image and action, were being used to underline imperial power in the face of rival internal and external powers. Thus, Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina is certainly a suitable case study for this thesis and is of particular significance due to her unique circumstances as the first empress based in Constantinople after its reconquest, and as a figure to whom modern audiences can ascribe a

[9] S. Kalopissi-Verti, 'Patronage and Artistic Production in Byzantium during the Palaiologan Period', in S. T. Brooks (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557): Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture* (New York, NY, 2006), pp.76-97, pp.76-9, provides an overview of this rebuilding programme in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century.
[10] Theodore Metochites, Μονωδία ἐπί τή βασιλίδι Θεοδώρα τή τού βασιλέως μητρί, part. ed. & trans. A.-M. Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina: Wife of Michael VIII', *DOP* 46 (1992), pp.295-303. I have used Talbot's partial translations of 'Monody towards the Empress Theodora, the Mother of the Emperor' to discuss the prose monody created on her death, which comes from an unpublished oration in Vind.phil.gr.95, fol.179r-189r.

certain amount of personal agency in the presentation of her own reputation and representation.

10.1 Sigillography

As we have seen, one of the most reliably identifiable representations in Middle and Late Byzantium, is that of sigillographic representations. For this case study, there is one type of lead seal extant, within which there are minor differences in costume and layout between seals, which has a representation of Theodora on the reverse (fig.3.4; fig.3.5; fig.3.6).[11] On the obverse, the Virgin Mary was depicted as seated on a backless throne – the *thokos* – holding the Christ Child on her lap. On the reverse, Theodora was depicted in a full-length, frontal pose, wearing a high crown with strands of *pendilia,* the *loros,* and holding a jewelled sceptre in her hand. There are some stylistic differences between Seal C and the two others (Seal A and B), particularly in terms of regalia.[12] Whereas Seal C depicted a lower and more oblong crown with a flat top and a single stand of *pendilia*, Seals A and B depicted a higher, more elaborate crown, with *pendilia* which ended in three separate strands. The seal examples, particularly Seal C, are stylistically most similar to the sigillographic representation of Piroška-Eirene (fig.2.48), with the exception of the *thorakion*. When looking later in this period, stylistic connections can also be made with

[11] The Dumbarton Oaks Seals Collection owns three of these seals in varying conditions under the numbers BZS.1951.31.5.1701 (Seal A – fig.3.4); BZS.1947.2.370 (Seal B – fig.3.5); BZS.1958.106.641 (Seal C – fig.3.6): *DOS VI*, no. 105.1-3 – Seals A-C respectively. I have assigned these seals shorter designations for ease of reference during this chapter. Seal D is a far superior version of Seals B and C, which belongs to the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, and that I have included for clarity (fig.3.7).

[12] This is where one of the discrepancies lies between these three examples; in the Seal C example, the sceptre is held in the right hand, not the left as it is on Seal A and B. The sceptres in Seal A and B consisted of four ellipses with projections on either side of each one. Seal C, on the other hand, was a *baion* – for more detail, see 10.2.1 A Lost Mosaic?

the seals of Yolande-Eirene of Montferrat (fig.3.8) and Anna of Savoy: the more oblong shaped crown and the single strand of *pendilia.*[13]

Her identifying inscription covered the rest of the background on the seal in two columns on either side of the figure: Θεοδώρα εύσεβεστάτη αύγούστα Δούκαινα ή Παλα[ι]ολογί[να], 'Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, most pious *augusta*'. The 'most pious' descriptor, εύσεβεστάτη, was a gendered naming convention, which stretched back to at least the eleventh century and was a written reiteration of the message which the Christian symbols already displayed: comparative examples include the mosaics of Zoe Porphyrogennete and Piroška-Eirene in Hagia Sophia (fig.2.39 and fig.2.47 respectively).

10.1.1 Family Names

The sigillographic nomenclature can be discussed further: contemporary elite women tended to use named that displayed either their own family connections or those gained through their husbands' families. By choosing to use these names, despite the relative distance in kinship, the empress was underlining her imperial associations. It was no accident that Theodora chose to adopt her husband's and son's family name, even more closely aligning herself to the imperial household, as well as creating a more cohesive and stable image of rule.

[13] Seal A and B show more similarities with the miniature of Anna of Savoy in terms of the style of the *pendilia* and the tall, layered crown, in Stuttgart, cod.hist.2°, fol.601: Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality*, pp.29-30, pl. 28 & also pl.32 for the evolution of the crown. There do not appear to be any projections or jewels on top of the crowns in sigillographic evidence, however, which Parani failed to take into account in her summary of the Late Byzantine crowns of empresses.

This can be shown even more plainly with the sigillographic remains of Yolande-Eirene of Montferrat and Anna of Savoy. For example, Yolande-Eirene, who was the daughter-in-law of Theodora, used three family names – Komnene, Doukaina, and Palaiologina – on her seals (fig.3.8),[14] and was thus laying claim to the imperial lineage of three houses. Though Yolande-Eirene could technically have laid claim to the first two of these last names through her own lineage, particularly through her maternal grandfather's line, this seems doubtful. The imperial Komnene connection, for instance, was seven to eight generations removed and the members of her family tree were spread over many different locations: would she have been aware of the identity of these particular ancestors who lived two centuries ago?[15] It is far more likely that Yolande-Eirene adopted these names by way of her marriage with Andronikos; as well as more recent links, Andronikos' paternal grandfather, Andronikos, used that exact configuration of those family names as well.[16] Yet, on their seals, Michael VIII and Andronikos II used only Palaiologos as their family name,[17] suggesting that these signifiers were more important for imperial women, particularly those marrying into the family.[18] Yet, it was not always the case that women adopted their husband's familial names: the elite woman Thomais Komnene Doukaina Laskarina Kantakouzene Palaiologina did not add her husband's family name of Synadenos to her collection, and instead favoured her own familial connections:

[14] There are four examples of this seal type within the collection at Dumbarton Oaks: *DOS VI,* cat.107.1a-d. The clearest image has been selected for comparative purposes for this study: Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.1704; *DOS VI,* cat.107.1b.
[15] Yolande-Eirene's maternal line goes back to Alexios I Komnenos: Eirene Angelina – through Eirene's union with Philip of Swabia, her second marriage in 1198 – who was the second daughter of Isaak II Angelos (1185-95/1203-4), the son of Andronikos Doukas Angelos, the son of Theodora Komnene, the daughter of Alexios I Komnenos.
[16] The evidence for Andronikos Doukas Komnenos Palaiologos' name is also from a seal: J.-C. Cheynet & J.-F. Vannier, *Études Prosopographiques* (Paris, 1986), pp.176-7.
[17] Seals of Michael VIII Palaiologos: *DOS VI*, cat.104.1-2. Seals of Andronikos II Palaiologos: *DOS VI*, cat.106.1-3, 108.1.
[18] See Appendix 1.5.

this is evidenced by her portrayal and mention in the Lincoln College *typikon* (fig.3.9).[19] Consequently, I would argued that Theodora was choosing to link herself with the imperial family by adopting her husband's family names, emphasising her imperial connections, and thus underscoring the legitimacy and imperial nature of her children as well.

These seals showcased Theodora's imperial attributes, constructed and signalled via traditional and contemporary costuming and titles, as well as clearly underlining her imperial lineage through the careful and selective use of family names. As these seals were used in the empress' correspondence, they acted as the first and obvious signifier to her audience of the statement of Theodora's imperial status, displaying the office of the empress as being filled by a figure who was the legitimate possessor of it. In this vein, seals were one element of the overarching narrative that projected to display her position to her audience.

10.2 Ecclesiastical Imagery

Theodora's image can also be seen in a fresco of the exonarthex in the Church of St Mary in Apollonia, Albania (fig.3.24). The image is badly damaged, but the scene consists of Theodora, Michael, and their son and heir, Andronikos, on the viewer's left, with the Virgin Mary to the right. It is generally agreed upon that this is a donor portrait, with the Virgin Mary holding the

[19] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lincoln College gr. 35, f.2r. See Theodora Palaiologina Synadene, *Typikon: Bebaia Elpis,* ed. H. Delehaye, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues* (Brussels, 1921), pp.18-105; trans. A.-M. Talbot, '*Bebaia Elpis*: *Typikon* of Theodora Synadene for the Convent of the Mother of God *Bebaia Elpis* in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Four* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.1512-78: *Bebaia Elpis,* 135, p.1561, for Thomais' day of commemoration where her full name is given.

church; the patron was initially understood to be Theodora.[20] However, Hilsdale has made the argument that, as this church was an imperially-sponsored Komnenian foundation that was receiving a renewal of privileges from the new ruling family, this fresco pictorially wove together the 'Komnenian and Palaiologan rulers through their acts of generosity'.[21] Because of the positioning of those involved, I would agree with Hilsdale's interpretation of the fresco, but also point out that this fresco also underlines the monastery's positive relationship with imperial power more generally, not just the emperor. It also showcases the close association of the imperial family with pious actions, their divine favour and linking backward to the legitimising past, which was especially important in this period of reconquest and renewal.

10.2.1 A Lost Mosaic?

As a point of comparison, we might also look at a copy of a mosaic drawn by Du Cange where Theodora was again depicted with family members (fig.3.10).[22] The Castilian ambassador, Ruy González de Clavijo, noted the existence of the portrait of an imperial family next to the image of the Virgin Mary in the Church of the Theotokos Peribleptos, Constantinople; it has been suggested that this mention referred to the same portrait group as is in Du

[20] Melichar, *Late Byzantine Empresses*, p.83. Koder and Trapp initially argued that this church was patronised by Theodora: J. Koder & E. Trapp, 'Bericht über eine Reise nach Albanien', *JÖB* 15 (1966), pp.391-4. See G. Fingarova, 'Die Stifterin *par excellence*: Zur Deutung des Stifterbildes in der Marienkirche von Apollonia, Albanien', in L. Theis, M. Mullett & M. Grünbart, with G. Fingarova & M. Savage (eds.), *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond* (Vienna, 2011-2), pp.283-98, for detailed discussion of the make up of this fresco and the role played by the Virgin Mary.
[21] C. J. Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge, 2014), pp.103-6. Interestingly, the accompanying inscription also titles Michael as a 'New Constantine' and describes his imperial lineage.
[22] Charles du Fresne, sieur du Cange, *Familiae augustae byzantinae seu stemmata Imperatoribus christianis* (Paris, 1680; Venice, 1729): Du Cange, p.233.

Cange's illustration.[23] Du Cange's drawing of the mosaic may have furnished her portraiture, and that of her family members', with conventions more appropriate to his day than to thirteenth-century Constantinople, but he also recorded the imperial regalia, titles, and, perhaps unexpected, accompaniments, that were depicted with the empress. Thus, the drawing shows that Theodora was standing in the conventional position of secondary honour, with Michael VIII on the right and their child, Constantine, in between them.[24] They were all standing upon a s*uppedion*, which in this instance took the shape of a large cushion – presumably red in colour – as it frequently did from the eleventh century onwards. Theodora was also depicted in full imperial regalia: she carried the *baion*,[25] and wore a high crown, though the *pendilia* – certainly the norm – are missing from this interpretation. The inscription underneath depicted her as *basilissa* and *autokratorissa* of the Romans, which mirrored those depicted beneath her husband. In terms of titles, although they reflected those of Michael, they carried a more singular tradition: only one earlier empress, Maria of Alania (1071-81), is known to have been represented

[23] Ruy González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlán,* ed. F. López Estrada (Madrid, 1943), trans. G. le Strange, *Embassy to Tamerlane* (London, 1928): Clavijo, p.37. The church was built by Romanos III in the eleventh-century and was located off the southern section of the Mese. Mango suggested that it could also be in the refectory of the same church, as alluded to in later sources: Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire,* pp.217-8. As Clavijo referred to other sections of the church as being decorated with mosaic, I have taken this to mean that this portrait group was also a mosaic. However, some doubt might be cast upon this as Clavijo does not mention the middle figure of Constantine in his description.

[24] Constantine was their fifth child – though the birth years of two of the daughters are somewhat problematic and cause difficulty for the chronology – who went on to marry Eirene Raoulina: D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453* (Cambridge, 1993), p.131.

[25] This was the Palaiologan name for the sceptre of the empress and was mentioned in the ceremonies of both the empress and the dowager-empress in Pseudo-Kodinos: Pseudo-Kodinos, Τακτικόν περί των οφφικίων του Παλατίου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως και των οφφικίων της Μεγάλης Εκκλησίας, ed. J. Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des offices,* Monde byzantine 1 (Paris, 1966), trans. R. J. Macrides, J. A. Munitiz, & D. Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies,* Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies 15 (Farnham, 2013): Pseudo-Kodinos, VII, 223-5.

with the title *autokratorissa* (fig.2.34).[26] In other comparative materials, the costume, iconography and positioning, look very similar to the depiction of Maria of Antioch (1161-80), in both of her miniature representations (fig.2.45; fig.2.46).[27] Thus, Theodora's portrayal here carries on those imperial conventions that were so well identified within the twelfth century, and emphasises the alignment of the current empress with these previous empresses before the fall of the capital.

Significantly, the copy of this mosaic does not show Andronikos who, though their second-born son, was the heir apparent because of the infant death of his elder brother, which might have been expected. Instead, it shows a younger child, Constantine.[28] Owing to the inscription below Constantine ascribing him the name 'Porphyrogennetos', it could be suggested that this particular configuration was picked to emphasis the imperial nature of the family: not only were the parents entitled twice with imperial positions, but the child was one who was 'born in the purple', and so born when the father already held imperial office.[29] This signifier linked back to the tenth century onwards when emphases of this kind were being placed on imperial children

---

[26] Spatharakis, *Portrait*, p.238; the manuscript is *BnF* Coisl.79 fol.1v. Helena Dragaš (or Helena Palaiologina, as Spatharakis called her) was the next and last empress to be called *autokratorissa* in her depiction in MS. Ivoires 100, 2r.

[27] *BAV* Vat.gr.1176, fol.2r and *BAV* Vat.gr.1851, fol.6r, 7r can provide examples of style and iconography of the empress during the late-twelfth century. Vat.gr.1176 specifically labelled the image as Maria of Antioch and gave her the title of both *augusta* and *autokratorissa*. Vat.gr.1851, on the other hand, was unlabelled but has been convincingly argued as being a didactic text for Agnes-Anna of France on her betrothal to Alexios: C. J. Hilsdale, 'Constructing a Byzantine *augusta*: A Greek Book for a French Bride', *ArtBull* 87.3 (2005), pp.456-83. Maria of Antioch would thus be the elder female in the illuminations, which, stylistically, does tie in with her other representation. For a differing opinion, see C. Hennessy, 'A Child Bride and Her Representation in the Vatican Epithalamion, cod. Gr. 1851', *BMGS* 30.2 (2006), p.115-150; Hennessy argued that the intended recipient was Maria, Bulgarian princess and bride of Andronikos IV (1376-9).

[28] Melichar has also discussed this image, but incorrectly identified the child as Andronikos: Melichar, *Late Byzantine Empresses*, p.82.

[29] Pseudo-Kodinos, VII, 211-13 shows that the two titles were also used in the coronation of a new emperor in the Palaiologan period.

and thus, on imperial lineages and marriages. The mosaic's function, therefore, was to underline the legitimacy of the imperial family, through the titles, as well as the costumes.

10.3 Records of Representation: Figural and Textual

Though there is little in the material record that indicates how Theodora was represented in public-facing, or indeed private, physical imagery, there is evidence to suggest that other representations of Theodora existed. It was recorded that her image was in sigillographic form on a chrysobull to outline her recantation of unionist policies supported during the reign of Michael VIII – and she is, in fact, the only empress known to have issued a chrysobull.[30] This clearly denoted the importance of both this occasion and Theodora's participation in this controversy, as chrysobulls were items of particular political significance. Closed with a gold seal, bearing an image of a divine and an imperial figure, chrysobulls were usually created to celebrate treaties with foreign powers, and donations to monasteries.[31] As the chrysobull's seal was noted to have the Virgin Mary and Christ Child on the obverse, her portraiture would likely been similar to her extant lead seals too. Her status as empress, through costume, titles and names, associations with the divine and the

[30] This took place at the first council of Blachernai, during Andronikos' reign: Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina', p.298. While this may be true, as a gold seal of Theodora (1050) remains extant, it could be suggested that she may also have produced a chrysobull during her reign.

[31] Spatharakis, *Portrait*, pp.184-9, 246-7: Andronikos II, for instance, issued two chrysobulls – with himself depicted in miniatures – which are still extant. One was issued in 1301 to bestow privileges on the metropolitan of Monembasia (Byzantine Museum, Athens, MS.80) and one was issued in 1307 to the bishop of Kanina, confirming the possessions of his See (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M.398). The best known chrysobull is probably that of Alexios III Megas Komnene of Trebizond (1349-90); it depicted both him and the empress, Theodora Komnene Kantakouzene, and was issued in 1347 to Dionysius of Athos, granting him a large sum on money for the erection of the Monastery of the Grand Komnenos (Dionysiou Monastery, Mount Athos).

context of producing such a politically significant document, would have only been further emphasised. That Andronikos wished for his mother to be involved in this matter shows her significance during his reign, as well as indicating that Theodora, as the empress, was able to enter into this sphere. Empresses were often described, particularly by later authors, as being at the heart of the resolution of religious controversy, illustrating either that this was an appropriate field for empresses to be involved in, or because the author was inferring that gender had an impact on the matter remaining unresolved for so long.[32] Theodora's recantation and support for her son in the context of a council and the ceremonial actions that followed, would likely have contributed to a boost in his popularity and legitimacy, and underlined her own status as the pious *augusta*.

10.3.1 Patronage and *Typika*

Theodora was a prolific patron of a variety of media.[33] However, as with her depictions in mosaic format, her commissions have either been destroyed or now exist in augmented forms. One such example was the *Lips* Monastery, which was situated in Constantinople, rebuilt by Theodora in the latter half of the thirteenth century and transformed into a convent, with the addition of a

[32] James, *Empresses and Power*, p.94, argued that empresses, whether praised or criticised, were still able to be involved in these matters, but could also be slated for their involvement delaying the rightful cause. Further examples include: Pulcheria at the centre of the Council of Chalcedon, 451; Eirene of Athens restoring the veneration of icons at the Second Council of Nikaia, 794; and Theodora restoring icon-veneration for the second time at the Synod of Constantinople, 843. See Herrin, *Women in Purple,* pp.51-129, 185-239 for a focus on these latter empresses as being responsible for the success of the iconodoules. Comparatively, see L. Brubaker & J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c.680-850: The Sources: An Annotated Survey* (London & New York, NY, 2017), pp.71-2, for imperial women as iconophiles as later inventions.

[33] I explored this aspect of Theodora's tenure in my MA thesis on the patronage of elite Palaiologan women, (University of Birmingham, 2012).

new church dedicated to John the Baptist.[34] The convent received its name from its previous tenth-century patron, Constantine Lips.[35] In addition to constructing the buildings, Theodora also had a *typikon* composed for the convent, laying out detailed rules for them to follow.[36] The instructions ran from how many nuns should reside in the convent – fifty – and what their duties should be, to the finances and governing of the convent, as well as giving rules for the hospital attached. From the *Lips*' *typikon,* several motivations behind Theodora's desire to be a patron of this convent come to light. First and foremost was her hope that in having invested much of her wealth into this convent, and therefore into the veneration of the Virgin Mary and God, she was securing 'the expiation of [her] sins in this life' and would receive God's mercy when the Day of Judgement occurred.[37] This is a recurring theme that runs throughout *typika* in general, not just elite female-led projects. Theodora asked that the nuns remembered her in their common and private prayers consistently, and that her *typikon* be read at least three times a year.[38] Thus, within this context at least, her reputation, and that of her family, would continue to be remembered and commemorated.

---

[34] S. Ćurčić, 'Religious Settings of the Late Byzantine Sphere', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.65-93, p.66.
[35] T. Macridy, 'The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi', *DOP* 18 (1964), pp.253-77, pp.253-6. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the convent was turned into a mescid and later suffered extensive fire damage. After rebuilding, it now exists as the Fenâri Îsâ Câmîi.
[36] Written between 1294 and 1301, it has been suggested that the author was an anonymous ghost-writer and not actually Theodora herself, though her wishes were being precisely expressed: Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina', p.299.
[37] Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, *Typikon: Lips*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues* (Brussels, 1921), pp.106-36; trans. A.-M. Talbot, '*Lips: Typikon* of Theodora Palaiologina for the Convent of Lips in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Three* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.1265-86: *Lips*, 1, p.1265; 52, p.1281.
[38] *Lips*, 8, p.1268; 52, p.1279.

One of Theodora's other concerns was the construction of a mausoleum for the imperial family. She specifically stated where she wanted to be buried in the church and that she wished to join her mother, Eudokia Angelina, as she could not 'bear to be separated from her even after my death'.[39] As well as having reserved spaces for immediate family members, such as her sons and daughters – one of whom, Anna, she had already interred there – she proposed that other relatives and descendants could be buried there too, down to her grand-daughters' husbands.[40] In the Church of St John the Baptist there remains, in fact, twelve masonry tombs and two ossuaries, with six tombs in the narthex.[41] The *Lips* complex was, indeed, a burial complex of large proportions.

It has been suggested that Theodora was emulating the actions of Piroška-Eirene, who had constructed the imperial mausoleum for the Komnenids in the twelfth-century Pantokrator Monastery.[42] Macridy has suggested that Theodora chose this site because of its location: the Church of the Holy Apostles, and the ancient imperial mausoleum within, was badly damaged during the Latin occupation.[43] The reconstructed site of the *Lips* was only around seven hundred metres away from the mausoleum of Constantine and Justinian: though not directly next to each other, the two structures were in the same locality. However, Holy Apostles had not been used as the site of imperial burial for centuries; the Komnenian dynasty had used the Pantokrator

[39] *Lips*, 42, p.1278.
[40] *Lips*, 42, pp.1278-9.
[41] Macridy, 'Monastery of the Lips', p.269.
[42] Ćurčić, 'Religious Settings', p.66. Ćurčić also suggested that the 'rich exterior articulation and the decorative vocabulary' of Eirene's church resembled that of some Komnenian buildings.
[43] Macridy, 'Monastery of the Lips', p.258. The measurements are my own, calculated with a web mapping service, with the location provided by Macridy.

complex, but Holy Apostles was still remembered and associated with older dynasties and thus imperial power.[44] The connotation within the topography of the city was clear; the new imperial family – the restorers of the imperial capital, the imperial city of Constantine and Justinian – was associated with ancient and noble imperial entities through the mausoleum's positioning and their activities. However, there were no specifications made for Michael VIII.[45] His exclusion from the family mausoleum, at least in the record of the *typikon*, further suggests that Theodora was attempting to support her son and dissociate herself from the unpopularity of Michael's unionist policies, thus again emphasising her role in contemporary politics as dowager empress.

As well as their burials, Theodora specified that offerings must be made on behalf of her relatives, to whom she assigned this right by name. She also made it clear that only her immediate relatives and kinswomen were allowed to visit the convent, in case they should wish to venerate the church and their family tombs.[46] These posthumous provisions clearly demonstrated one of Theodora's main motivations in patronising this convent; she wished for her family to be secure after her death, to have a reliable site for her loved ones to be buried close to each other, and for both their memories and their reputations to be remembered. A family mausoleum provided a space within the city for future generations to draw upon in terms of legitimacy, imperial status, and

---

[44] At the start of the thirteenth century, for instance, Mesarites discussed the site and burials within Holy Apostles at length: Mesarites, 83-133. In a recent publication, Ousterhout also discusses the connection between the three sites of Lips, Holy Apostles and the Pantokrator, and in terms of its significance to the Byzantine viewer: Ousterhout, 'Piroska and the Pantokrator', p.255.

[45] A.-M. Talbot, 'The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII Palaiologos', *DOP* 47 (1993), pp.243-61, p.255. Michael VIII was refused an Orthodox burial on his death in 1282 because of his Unionist policies and was buried in the Church of Christ the Saviour, Selymbria: Georgios Pachymeres, Ιστορία, ed. A. Failler, CFHB 24, trans. V. Laurent, *Pachymères, Georges, Relations historique* (Paris, 1984): Pachymeres, II 659-661.

[46] *Lips*, 15-6, p.1270.

remembrance; Theodora thus ensured that the Palaiologans, and their reputation, became a part of the urban topography and city's memory.

Furthermore, this *typikon* made provisions for Theodora's daughters and granddaughters, in the case that they join the convent as nuns. Optional special treatment was to be accorded them; her daughters – Eirene and Eudokia – were to receive the rations of four of the nuns, were allowed to live privately, and could be assigned up to three nuns as servants if they had need of them.[47] This was very much at odds with the ruling that Theodora made in an earlier chapter, wherein the nuns were to be be treated equally, especially at meal times and with seating arrangements, regardless of social background or the type of donation made before entering the convent.[48] Finally, Theodora also made provisions for the charitable work that she expected the convent to undertake – a well-supplied and well-staffed hospital, and orphans taken in, regardless of their social background.[49] As the *despoina*, Theodora asserted that she was well within her rights to order her affairs in such a way and she clearly expected them to be obeyed, with no interference from outside bodies.[50]

[47] *Lips*, 40-1, p.1278: However, Theodora does make the distinction that it would please her greatly if her daughters did adhere to the rule of the *typikon* as it would show their obedience and piety.
[48] *Lips*, 14, 18, pp.1269-71; 29, p.1274, for the rules surrounding mealtimes. For further discussion on the provision of food and goods in Palaiologan convents, as well as other philanthropic ventures therein, see L. A. Wainwright, "Charity Begins at the Monastery': Female Philanthropy in the Palaiologan Period', in L. Brubaker, A. Kelley & F. Vanni (eds.), *Peasants and Poverty in Byzantium* (Cambridge, forthcoming).
[49] *Lips*, 50-1, p.1281, for the hospital; 18, pp.1270-1, for the treatment of orphans. These orphans were to be given the option of tonsure when they reached sixteen years of age.
[50] *Lips*, 1-2, 11, pp.1265-6, 1268-9. Theodora was referred to as the *despoina* in this text, instead of *augusta* as was seen on her seals. As can be inferred from chapter 11 of the *typikon*, it may be that she chose this title to indicate the mistress-servant relationship in play here, as opposed to her rank of *augusta*. As also pointed out in the *typikon*, ranks and status from the outside world were not to be brought into the convent: this could be a way of contravening this.

In the late thirteenth century, Theodora also restored the Convent of the *Anargyroi* – the medical saints, Kosmas and Damian. In its *typikon*, she notes that the establishment had an earlier patron, the unnamed *logothetes tou dromou*, but the building had been so damaged during the Latin occupation of the city, that Theodora had felt compelled to patronise its reconstruction.[51] Again, Theodora's main aim here was the commemoration of both her ancestors and descendants, though she also made provisions for the instructions of the previous patron on behalf of himself and his family.[52] She also took pains to underline that she was just as committed to this new responsibility as she was to her bigger project of patronising the Convent of the *Lips*.[53]

From these *typika*, one could argue that Theodora was interested in patronising religious establishments that would continually commemorate the imperial family and which were places of safety within the confines of the city, where her kinswomen could peacefully retire. The Convent of the *Lips* was very important to Theodora as it was to house the earthly remains of her children, her mother, and other family members, as well as herself; it seemed crucial to her that their burial places be secured and protected, without outside interference. The amount of work and funding that went into these establishments, and their subsequent charitable deeds, were to inspire the removal of her earthy sins, allowing her entry into heaven. Theodora also

---

[51] Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, *Typikon: Anagyroi*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues* (Brussels, 1921), pp.136-40; trans. A.-M. Talbot, '*Anargyroi: Typikon* of Theodora Palaiologina for the Convent of Sts. Kosmas and Damian in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Three* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.1287-94: *Anargyroi*, 1, pp.1290-1. As with the *Lips typikon*, Theodora was concerned with external interferences and, to that end, she reiterated that her actions were only for 'spiritual renewal', not to displace the previous patron's wishes, suggesting that the earlier *typikon* was extant.
[52] *Anargyroi*, 6, p.1292.
[53] *Anargyroi*, 2, p.1291. Unfortunately, there is no evidence for the Convent of the *Anargyroi* outside of the *typikon.*

seemed determined to be remembered and commemorated as pious and charitable, as she also expected her family to be – her own reputation and the reputation of the family was distinctly outlined. Though there does seem to be some similarities in this vein to other *typika*, I would argue that this was not a trope followed by all patrons. Along gender lines, however, most female-patronised convents – for which we have written evidence, at least – adhered to this convention.[54]

10.3.2 Competitive Agency: Outside the Empire

With the rise of royal families outside of Constantinople and the shaky borders of the Byzantine Empire, I would argue that Theodora's patronage was at least partially competitive in nature. As described earlier, St Theodora of Arta was responsible for the convent of St Nicholas, now known as the Monastery of Theodora in her honour. She was also buried there in a sarcophagus inscribed with imperial iconography (fig.3.1), including an image of her son, Nikephoros, who became the *despot* of Epiros in 1267/8.[55] The sarcophagus displayed

[54] For example, the *Kecharitomene typikon*, compiled by Eirene Doukaina Komnene, underlined commemoration processes for family members: *Kecharitomene*, 71, pp.700-2. Unfortunately, only a few sections of the *typikon* of Eirene Choumnaina Palaiologina, c.1307, were copied down, but as it followed the Kecharitomene *typikon* so closely, we can assume that it would have mentioned something in this regard in a later chapter: *Philanthropos*, p.1384. The *typikon* of Bebaia Elpis also had sections dedicated to the commemoration of family members, and to others who had donated to the convent (see below for further details on family ties in *Bebaia Elpis*). Yet, it was uncommon for elite males and monks to make these types of provision for their family in Late Byzantine monasteries, though it does happen on occasion: Constantine Akropolites, *Testament: Anastasis*, ed. H. Delehaye, 'Constantini Acropolitae hagiographi byzantini epistularum manipulus' *AnalBoll* 51 (1933), pp.263-84, p.279-84; trans. A.-M. Talbot, '*Akropolites: Testament* of Constantine Akropolites for the Monastery of the Resurrection (*Anastasis*) in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Four* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.1374-82: *Akropolites,* pp.1374-82.

[55] It has been argued that the relief actually represented Anna, Theodora's daughter-in-law, and Anna and Nikephoros' son: B. Cvetković, 'The Investiture Relief in Arta, Epiros', *ZRVI* 33 (1994), pp.103-13. However, due to the context and Theodora's reputation, it would seem more likely that this relief should be identified with Theodora.

Theodora in accordance with Byzantine conventions: in the position of honour, represented in imperial costume, holding a cross-topped sceptre, crowned by the *manus dei,* and flanked by archangels.[56] Theodora would have known of Nikephoros and his mother, due to the contact between the two families: Anna, Nikephoros' wife, often served as the intermediary between the two courts.[57] Thus, not only was an empress, in living memory, responsible for the building of a monastery, wherein her image was represented as an empress, but it was slowly increasing in popularity and turning into a cult site.[58] As St Theodora was buried within it, there may have been suggestions of this becoming the mausoleum for the Epirote ruling family, leading to a need for a comparative imperial mausoleum within Constantinople.

Jelena of Anjou, queen of Serbia (c.1254-76), was also a possible cause for concern in terms of competing cultural capital: she was a prolific patron of churches within Serbia, such as the Gradač Monastery – which was also intended to be the imperial mausoleum – and the Shirgj Church.[59] There is also an extant icon which depicted her being blessed by a religious figure – a fairly innovative depiction of the patron being represented within the icon – but which also showed her sons, Dragutin and Milutin, as Byzantine emperors; they wear full imperial regalia (fig.3.11).[60] Though the original context of this icon is not

[56] The *manus dei* had not been seen regularly, in association with empresses, since the coinage of the fifth century: see Chapter Two: Aelia Ariadne. However, the *manus dei* was found on coinage in this period – the coins of Theodora Megale Komnene of Trebizond (1284-5) – and sporadically on some earlier Byzantine coinage, such as Constantine V (741-775) and John I Tzimiskes (969-76).
[57] Nicol, *Last Centuries,* pp.121-4.
[58] Talbot, 'The Life of Theodora', p.324.
[59] Ćurčić, 'Religious Settings', pp.86-7. Though Gradač was intended to be their mausoleum, only Jelena was buried there (1314) as her husband, Stefan Uroš I (1243-76), died much earlier than the completion of the building. Only a single wall remains of the Shirgj Church.
[60] B. Ratliff, cat.23, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', p.50. The icon was eventually gifted to Pope Nicholas IV.

known – even if it was public-facing, it would have had a relatively small audience – that the Serbian queen felt confident enough to have herself and her sons depicted in this way suggests that the appropriation of Byzantine regalia was ongoing, creating a competitive slant to these commissions. Her piety was also well-represented; as well as her patronage of religious institutions, in all of her depictions, she was shown in the garb of a nun. The Serbian king, Stephan Milutin (1282-1321), and his expansionist policies were certainly becoming problematic for the Byzantines during this period; Andronikos II married his very young daughter Simonida to Milutin in 1298 to appease him, despite the outrage of many Byzantines, including the patriarch of Constantinople and her own mother, Yolande-Eirene.[61]

These rival elements outside of the empire may well have been a catalyst for the very visible and publicly active role that Theodora embarked upon in her tenure, particularly in her son's reign and towards the end of her life. Public representation, particularly the portraiture seen in St Mary at Apollonia, titles, costumes and public actions of piety and patronage would have fused together to construct a clear image of the office of the empress and celebrate the prestige of that role, within the imperial family, once again ruling from Constantinople.

10.3.3 Competitive Agency: Inside the Empire

Although Theodora's patronage of these institutions are the ones for which there is the most information, there were certainly contemporary elite patrons, who likely acted as the internal pressures that caused Theodora to

[61] Nicol, *Byzantine Lady*, pp.49-50: He also suggested that Yolande-Eirene decided to move to Thessaloniki and set up her own court there to be closer to her young daughter and because of the deteriorating relationship with Andronikos II, especially after this event.

patronise and then safeguard these monasteries to such an extent. As the traditional seat of imperial power had only just been regained by Michael VIII, and other families within the Byzantine sphere had raised themselves up as rulers in their own right, competition with other elite families may have been a by-product. Still extant in Istanbul is the Pammakaristos Monastery, which includes a *parekklesion*, the funerary chapel of *protostrator* Michael Doukas Glabas Tarchaneiotes, commissioned by his wife, Martha Glabas.[62] This chapel was richly decorated, with mosaic and inscription, suggesting that considerable wealth had been spent on the decoration programme of the *parekklesion*. There was also a hospital, which Talbot thought probable to have been part of the same complex that Maria-Martha and Michael had patronised since 1263, continued by Maria-Martha after Michael's death.[63]

Theodore Metochites, an active member of Andronikos II's governing body, patronised the still-extant Chora Monastery, with its rich decorative schema of a mixture of frescoes and mosaics. His representation in a donor portrait is right above the main entrance into the naos: any visitor attending a service would have seen his image on entry.[64] Examples such as these, which combine donor representations with burial and memorial areas, suggest that there was an element of competitive memory space within the urban sphere; the importance of the remembrance of family and, indeed, the self, was clearly prevalent in Constantinople at this time. Franses has convincingly shown that

---

[62] H. Belting, C. Mango & D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul* (Washington D.C., 1978), pp.11-15. A substantial number of these mosaics are left intact today.
[63] Talbot, 'Restoration' p.257.
[64] R. Ousterhout, *The Art of the Kariye Camii* (London, 2002), pp.8, 23. The *parekklesion* was a funerary chapel, and the exonarthex also served as a burial space – the Chora thus housed the remains of Theodore Metochites, as well as other members of his family and social group: Ousterhout, *Kariye Camii*, pp.70, 86-88.

there can and should be multiple, active meanings attributed to these types of portraits: in his examination of Metochites' 'contact portrait', he shows how unlike in some other examples of donor portraits, Metochites is explicitly gifting the church to the holy figures and is most interested in getting across the understanding of contact between the two, rather than simply ownership, '*ktetor',* of the church.[65] On the other hand, because of the implicit wealth involved in creating this mosaic like this and the cost of supporting the Chora, Metochites is still displaying himself as a wealthy supplicant; the mosaic cannot help but advertise his social status, including through the purposeful visualisation of his high status clothing.[66]

In this same vein, there is the patronage of Theodora Palaiologina Synadene – whose daughter-in-law was mentioned earlier – to consider, although these activities took place a few years after the activities of Empress Theodora. Theodora Palaiologina Synadene and, later, her daughter Euphrosyne, patronised the Convent of Our Lady of Certain Hope, *Bebaia Elpis,* at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[67] They also produced a *typikon* to guide the daily life of the convent. This was an illuminated manuscript and, in this way, was something of an innovation, as it featured not only portraiture of monastic figures, but also the portraits of the family members of the patron over several leaves of the manuscript (fig.3.9).[68] These non-religious portraits

[65] Franses, *Donor Portraits,* pp.18-22.
[66] Franses, *Donor Portraits*, pp.31.
[67] Kalopissi-Verti, 'Patronage and Artistic Production', p.82.
[68] Oxford, Lincoln College gr. 35: f.1r represented Constantine Palaiologos and Eirene; f.2r John Synadenos and Thomais; f.3r John Synadenos and Eirene; f.4r Michael Philanthropenos and Anna; f.5r Manuel Asen and Anna; f.6r Euphrosyne Doukaina Palaiologina and Constantine Komnenos Raul; f.7r Theodoule (the monastic name of Theodora Palaiologina Synadene) and Ioakeim (the monastic name of her husband) with Euphrosyne as a child; f.8r Theodore Komnenos Doukas Palaiologos Synadenos and Eudokia Doukaina Komnene Synadene Palaiologina; f.9v Michael Tornikes and Eirene; f.11r Theodoule and Euphyrosyne in their monastic habit and in their role as patrons. This

represented the kinship ties between family members, monastic and non-monastic, and sought to promote and commemorate their identity together as a family, and demonstrate how they were all interlinked. They also indicated the success of the founders' family, immediate and extended, their piety – through the divine figures who bless them at the top of each leaf – and emphasised the aristocratic background from which the family emerged.[69]

Although the manuscript's figural miniatures looked traditional, these depictions had 'no precise forebears', which has led scholars like Lowden to suggest that Euphrosyne personally had these portraits arranged to represent positive imagery of her family, but rooted in a traditional figural style.[70] The text of the *typikon* reflected this by outlining strict rules surrounding the commemoration of family members, especially those who had donated to the convent – this generosity is emphasised in the *typikon*.[71]

Thus, we see a purposeful movement towards the idealisation of family members as part of a larger whole, and for the remembrance of the extended family unit as well as its reputation. It could be suggested this was is in direct competition with imperial patronage, emphasising the familial links and the importance of their own members even more strongly than that of Empress Theodora. This then leads to some understanding about the conditions and

---

information has been collated from Spatharakis, *Portraits*, fig.143-153, & L. Brubaker, 'Pictures are Good to Think with: Looking at Byzantium', in P. A. Agapitos, M. Hinterberger, & P. Odorico (eds.), *L'Écriture de la Mémoire: la Littérarité de l'Historiographie. Actes du IIIe colloque international philologique, Nicosie, 6-7-8 mai 2004* (Paris, 2006), pp.221-40, fig 5-7, 9.

[69] Brubaker, 'Pictures Are Good to Think with', pp.230-1.

[70] J. Lowden, 'Manuscript Illumination in Byzantium, 1261-1557', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.259-93, p.266.

[71] *Bebaia Elpis*, 113-119, 134-144, pp.1555-6, 1561-3.

rival power bases that had evolved within Constantinople at this time, and further our understanding of the imperial response.

10.3.4 Literary Representations

A further aspect that might be explored from Theodora's representation in textual records is the instances where she requested clemency on behalf of those who had been sentenced for a crime. Georgios Pachymeres portrayed Theodora as intervening with Michael VIII on behalf of the man in charge of the imperial treasury, a Kaloeidas, accused of slandering the emperor; he was thus given the lesser sentence of being blinded and having his nose cut off.[72] Additionally when her cousin, Michael Strategopoulos, was accused of treachery, Theodora pleaded with the emperor on his behalf; consequently she saved him from being blinded.[73] Thus, Theodora can be seen to be a figure of clemency and mercy; playing the role of the intercessor. This was a gendered convention which often cropped up in mid- to late medieval texts, particularly in the West: as ruler, the male had to take the hard-line stance, he could not be seen as a weak figure or would be liable to face challenges, but the queen could be seen to intervene and bring mercy into the ruling dynamic.[74] Particularly in

[72] Pachymeres, II 621, with the harsher sentence being execution.
[73] Pachymeres, II 615-7. Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina', p.296, showed their familial relationship.
[74] This was a trope that was played out many times in the Western Medieval world, with the queen acting as intercessor between the king and his enemies: see L. Benz St. John, *Three Medieval Queens: Queenship and the Crown in Fourteenth-Century England* (New York, NY, 2012), pp.33-4, for the English queen, Isabella of France, acting in an unofficial capacity on an embassy to France in 1314. In the mid-fourteenth century, Jean Froissart wrote that Philippa of Hainhault, Queen of England, threw herself at the feet of Edward III to save the lives of the burghers of Calais, by which his 'heart was softened' and he spared the men: Jean Froissart, *Chronique*, ed. J. A. C. Buchon, 3 vols (Paris, 1840), trans. G. Brereton, *Froissart: Chronicles* (London, 1968, repr. 1978): *Froissart*, 106-9.

the Medieval West, this role was often compared to that of the divine intercessor, the Virgin Mary.

This role particularly works in this context, as Michael VIII could not afford to allow treacherous behaviour, or a disrespectful relationship with an important member of the governing body, but it was also possible that he was not in a strong enough position to alienate potential allies. Michael might be able to expect the allegiance of his wife's family, based along the marital lines linking them, but actively blinding a member of her extended family would antagonise them. Thus, the depiction of this dynamic between the offices of emperor and empress projected an image of strength while, in actuality, a lesser sentence, and potentially less problematic solution, was being carried out. This aspect of the office of the empress naturally intertwined with those of piety and philanthropy, further emphasising her ability to act within this role, and thus further legitimise it.

Theodora's reputation for philanthropy, mercy, culture, and piety, was most clearly evidenced by the monody of Theodore Metochites on her death in 1303. As Talbot summarised, it was full of praise for her characteristics as an empress and laments on her death; of interest to this study particularly, the monody also mentioned the religious institutions that Theodora had patronised.[75] This indicates the impact that this kind of patronage had; it was not an obscure activity that women undertook to pass the time, but an important and noteworthy activity that was both associated with the empress herself and used to emphasis and enhance their reputation.

[75] *Metochites*, fol.184v-186r; Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina', p.302.

10.3.5 A Literary Patron?

In his monody, Metochites also praised Theodora's extensive education, as well as her generosity through her patronage of the arts: the 'careful ornamentation of holy scriptures and books'.[76] It is possible that, under the patronage of Theodora and Michael VIII, an imperial library was set up in the newly restored Blachernai Palace, which would tie in well with Theodora's known activities as a literary patron. In the colophon of a manuscript of theological florilegia, a scribe called Leo Kinnamos noted that he 'deposited [this text] in the imperial library', though the validity of this colophon has been called into question.[77] There is also evidence to support the theory that Theodora was the patron for a prolific literary group during this period. A manuscript collection associated with the empress has been grouped together because of their stylistic similarities, such as the *Perlschrift* writing technique and the ornamentation of the headpieces, and covered a range of types including gospels, lectionaries, and psalters.[78] That this was created under the

[76] *Metochites*, fol.184v; Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina', p.301.
[77] Talbot, 'Restoration', p.250. The manuscript in question is Par.gr.1115, fol.306v. Pachymeres, II 649.30-651.4 gives evidence for the existence of a library within the imperial palace also.
[78] The updated group so far consists of **Gospels** – Athos, Dionysiu 5; Florence, Bibli. Mediceo-Laurenziana Plut. VI, 28; Athos, Lavra A 2; Venice, Biblioteca Marciana gr.541; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocci 31; Vat.gr.1158; J. Paul Getty Museum, L.A. MS.65 – **Homilies** – Oxford, Bodlein Library, Laudian – **Lectionaries** – Mount Sinai, gr.228; Athos, Iviron 30 m; Athos, Stauronikita 27; Vat.gr.352; National Library of Greece, MS.2546 & MS.2646; *BL* Add.29713; Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, Cod.1 – **New Testaments** – Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, W 525 – **Praxapostolos** – Vat.gr.1208 – **Psalters** – Athos, Stauronikita 46; *BnF*, Par.gr.21; *BnF*, Par.gr.260 – and a ***typikon*** – *BL* Add.22748, the manuscript containing the *Lips typikon*. This information has been collated from H. Belting & H. Buchthal, *Patronage in Thirteenth-Century Constantinople: An Atelier of Late Byzantine Book Illumination and Calligraphy* (Washington D.C., 1978), pp.4-5; J. Lowden & R. S. Nelson, 'The Palaeologina Group: Additional Manuscripts and New Questions', *DOP* 45 (1991), pp.59-68, pp.59, 63, 65; K. Maxwell, 'Another Lectionary of the 'Atelier' of the Palaiologina, Vat. Gr. 352', *DOP* 37 (1983), pp.47-54, pp.47-8; A. Marava-Chatzinicolaou & C. Toufexi-Paschou, *Catalogue of the Illuminated Byzantine Manuscripts of the National*

direction and aegis of Theodora has been argued due to her noted interest in literary culture, as well as the presence of an imperial monogram in one of the manuscripts (fig.3.12), and her known patronage of *typika* – specifically the *Lips typikon*, BL Add.22748, which has been identified as belonging to the Palaiologina group.[79] However, it was proposed by Belting and Buchthal that Theodora Palaiologina Raoulina, the niece of Michael VIII Palaiologos, was the patroness of this group of manuscripts.[80] Lowden and Nelson pointed out that the atelier may have been under the patronage of several wealthy persons, as a large amount of manuscripts were produced, and were spread out over a few decades.[81]

Even if Theodora was only the patron of one of these manuscripts from the Palaiologina Group, this still reflects on her interests and known affiliations; she, and her circle of elites, were known to be cultured and philanthropic, and this therefore also underlines the appropriate means of behaviour for those belonging to the office of the empress. We know of other elite women earlier in the Byzantine period who patronised literary circles, and who had work commissioned for them and in their honour.[82] Theodora was therefore tapping

---

Library of Hreece, Vol. 2: Manuscripts of New Testament Texts, 13th-15th Century (Athens, 1985, pp.70, 77, 79-80.

[79] Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina', pp.301-3; Lowden & Nelson, 'The Palaeologina Group', p.67, both discuss this patronage and conclude in favour of Theodora. The imperial monogram appeared on the Gospel, Vat.gr.1158 fol.5r and fol.6v situated within the canon table.

[80] Belting & Buchthal, *Patronage in Thirteenth Century Constantinople,* pp.99-101. They argued that Theodora Palaiologina Raoulina was a wealthy widow in the last decade of the thirteenth century, thus had the financial and social means to sponsor such a project. She was closely related to the two emperors of this period, and hence would have been within her rights to use the imperial monogram.

[81] Lowden & Nelson, 'The Palaeologina Group', p.68.

[82] See E. M. Jeffreys, 'The *Sevastokratorissa* Eirene as Literary Patroness: The Monk Iakovos', *JÖB* 32.3 (1982), pp.63-71, for one such case. Empress Bertha-Eirene is known to have commissioned the poet John Tzetzes to produce a manuscript of Homer's works, the *Allegories of the Illiad,* and he also dedicated *Chiliades* to her: E. M. Jeffreys, 'The Comnenian Background to the *romans d'antiquité*', *Byz* 50 (1980), pp.455-86, particularly pp.473-4.

into a tradition that had been ongoing for centuries and was wholly appropriate for her to take a role in the production and sponsorship of a literary circle.[83]

Conclusion

Overall, Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina is one of the more varied and significant of the case studies. She faced the difficult task of being the first empress to rule from post-conquest Constantinople. As such, her extant depiction clearly attempted to connect her to the long line of women that had held the office of empress before her and to her family, through features such as costume, nomenclature and public activities. The physical depictions that were recorded go further to show how the imperial features of her tenure were underlined: regalia, divine associations, titles, and imperial children. Both the physical and the recorded imagery were distinctly connected to images of eleventh- and twelfth-century empresses, such as Maria of Alania, Piroška-Eirene, and Maria of Antioch. Additionally, the actions recorded throughout her reign, including those of her actions as dowager empress, were those that emphasised her as philanthropic, well educated, merciful and pious, with a focus on the family and remembrance, which have antecedents in the actions of earlier empresses. This then further linked back to the model built of the pious empress that took form in early Byzantium, and thus expressed the ideals that constituted the office of the empress.

[83] This is despite some evidence that shows that Theodora was unable to write – Talbot points out that she signed a chrysobull only with a cross (σταυροῦ): Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina', p.298. Perhaps this further indicates why she was interested in patronising a literary circle: to buoy her reputation as an educated, elite woman.

Finally, the innovation and competing elements seen in external, peripheral and internal, urban groups may have influenced the way in which Theodora was portrayed and how she conducted – or was said to have conducted – her life. Her representations, physical depictions and public actions, all linked together cohesively and were used to construct a visible, imperial narrative that could counter those presented by rival powers, both within and outside the borders of the empire. With this theme of competition in mind, we now turn to our next case study, Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina.

Chapter Eleven: Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina

Over the past three decades there have been several works on Byzantine empresses, but by their nature, they tended to concentrate on centralised power; on the imperial family in Constantinople. Yet after the fragmentation brought about by the Fourth Crusade in 1204, new rulers appeared, or grew in strength, in polities on the borders of Byzantium: Epiros, Trebizond, Serbia, and Bulgaria, for instance. These ruling powers, the female figures of which were often named the *basilissa* or the *despoina,* very often had limited or no links with the central, imperial family of Byzantium, even after its re-establishment in 1261. Yet they still successfully conferred legitimacy on themselves, largely by associating themselves – or being associated with – and appropriating the signposts of imperial rule; clearly this would only work if the intended audience was able to interpret and then remember those markers as such. This case study of Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina (henceforth, Maria Angelina for brevity's sake) will explore this phenomenon and how it was manufactured, especially through the manipulation of a shared cultural memory; by virtue of lineage and family reputation, and through consideration of titles, representations, and social undertakings. Due to the constraints of this study, this will not explore in too much depth what it means to be 'Byzantine', but instead will focus on how Maria Angelina ruled from a polity that was not Byzantium and yet was able to co-opt Byzantine imperial trappings to do so.

Maria Angelina was the *basilissa* of Serbia in the fourteenth century, born around 1349/1350. As her name indicated, she was related – sometimes

quite distantly – to four families of Byzantium that had, one time or another, held the throne. Her parents were Symeon Uroš and Thomais Orsini, the rulers of the despotate of Epiros, Thessaly.[1] In 1361, when she was twelve, she was married to Thomas Preljubović, a union which resulted in a daughter, Eirene, who died in one of the outbreaks of plague in Ioannina in 1375.[2] Thomas was deeply unpopular with his subjects – or, at least, was portrayed to have been in the *Chronicle of Ioannina* – which may have resulted in his assassination in 1384.[3] In the next year, Maria Angelina married a second time to Esau Buondelmonti, who thus became the next *despotes* of Epiros, but the union produced no children that appear in the historical record.[4] As in the case study of Ariadne and Zoe Porphyrogennete, Maria Angelina is an example of a woman conferring legitimacy on subsequent males: they were only able to take control of this polity because of their marital ties with her. She died in 1391, at around the age of forty-two, and Esau continued on as despot, marrying a further two times.[5]

There were ample suitable cases for this century. Another candidate was Anna of Savoy (1328-41), born Giovanna, the second wife of Andronikos III

---

[1] D. M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267-1479: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), p.139. Symeon took over these areas after the death of Stefan IV Dušan, his half-cousin, and Despot Nikephoros II Orsini, his brother-in-law. Previously they had lived in Kastoria.
[2] Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, p.146.
[3] *Chronicle of Ioannina*, ed. L. Vranousis, Το Χρονικόν των Ιωαννίνων κατ' ανέκδοτον δημώδη επιτομήν, Επετηρίς του Μεσαιωνικού Αρχείου 12 (1962), pp.57-115, pp.74-101; part. trans. D. M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267-1479: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984): *Chron. Ioann.*, c.27-8, pp.93-4.
[4] The *Chronicle of Ioannina* does not hint at any misconduct on their parts, but Chalkokondyles suggests that Maria had fallen madly in love on seeing Esau, and that they then plotted together to kill Thomas: Laonikos Chalkokondyles, Ἀποδείξεις Ἱστοριῶν, ed. I. Bekker, CHSB 31 (Bonn, 1843), part. trans. D. C. Agoritsas, 'Maria Angelina Doukaina Palaiologina and Her Depictions in Post-Byzantine Mural Paintings', *ZRVI* 51 (2014), pp.171-85: *Chalk*, I. 198-9. This is not corroborated by any other sources however.
[5] Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, pp.162-3.

(1328-41). Anna was the only empress ruling from Constantinople to mint coins which included both her image and her name (fig.3.13).[6] Additionally her image can be found in sigillographic form (fig.3.14), and as a miniature (fig.3.15).[7] There was also Simonis Palaiologina – later named Simonida Nemanjić – who was the daughter of Yolande-Eirene of Monferrat and Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328). She was married at a very young age to the increasingly powerful – and thus a problem in the eyes of the Byzantine state – Serbian king, Stefan Milutin (1282-1321), making her both a Byzantine princess and the Serbian queen. Her image is found alongside her husband's in the frescoes of Gračanica Monastery, Serbia.

However, Maria Angelina was chosen for this case study, not only for the three icons – which, in terms of portraiture, certainly identify her as a Byzantine empress, and are both emphatic and innovative in highlighting her piety – for which she probably acted as donor, but also due to her positioning: as the *basilissa* of Epiros, she represented a new type of rule that was ongoing in these fragmented areas, once part of the Byzantine Empire. There was therefore a large population of Greek-speaking people, as well as Serbians, in Epiros, impacting the intended audience for any portrayals of Maria Angelina.[8] As such, her choices in terms of patronage and in family names are as

---

[6] For examples of Anna's coinage, see *DOC V.II*, cat. 942-3, 966-1144, 1145, 1146-74. There is some debate as to whether the earlier of these coins were minted during her regency rule with her son, John V Palaiologos: P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol V: Michael III to Constantine XI (1258-1453), Part I: Introduction, Appendices, and Bibliography* (Washington D.C., 1999): *DOC V.I*, cat.176-181.

[7] She was also represented in a miniature of the illuminated manuscript, Stuttgart Codex Hist. 2^0 601, alongside her husband, Andronikos: Spatharakis *Portrait*, pp.237-9. Additionally, her seals can be found within the historical record: Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.639; BZS.1958.106.637; BZS.1958.106.638, and all can found in *DOS VI,* cat. 109.1a-c.

[8] Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, p.159.

important to examine as the title that she used; all choices were meant to show her close affiliation with others of the Byzantine imperial families. Thus, the thematic checklist of piety, patronage, positioning and portraiture are all seen within the representations of Maria Angelina.

11.1 Nomenclature: Titles and Names

One of the most obvious ways in which legitimacy and power were conveyed was that of titles. Unlike the early period, where largely the only term that specifically related to the official office of the empress was *augusta*, by the later periods, other titles, *basilissa* particularly, had become more commonly used when titling the office of the empress. Though it must be noted that there was a difference between official representations entitling the female figure, and literary texts – for one, the literary texts were not standardised or 'officially' approved by the imperial machine – up until later periods, the title *basilissa* was more descriptive and did not connote any particular functions, unlike the title of *augusta.*[9] Significantly, those titled as *augusta* invariably ruled from Constantinople: sigillographic records indicated that this was the case for empresses in the Palaiologan period, but does not appear to be officially used for other empresses.[10] The title *despoina* was a more general term meaning mistress, though as discussed in the previous chapter, St Theodora was

[9] James, *Empresses and Power*, pp.118, 125. *Basileus* first appeared on coins of Leo III and, as Eirene was the first empress physically represented after Leo, naturally she was the first to use the title *basilissa* numismatically – mainly, the nomenclature of the empress follows that of the emperor. See Bensammer, 'La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification', pp.243-91; Hill, *Imperial Women*, pp.108-14, for further discussion.
[10] Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, Yolande-Eirene of Montferrat, and Anna of Savoy all used *augusta* on their seals; *DOS VI,* cat. 105.1-3, 107.1a-d, 109.1.a-c respectively (fig.3.4-7; fig.3.8; fig.3.14).

certainly represented as an empress, and Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina was also described as *despoina* in her *typika*.

Maria Angelina, for instance, adopted the title *basilissa* and was referred to as such in both icons patronised by herself and in Greek sources, even though her parents had been *despotes.* Thus, on the reliquary icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child, from the Monastery of the Transfiguration in Meteora, Maria Angelina was described as 'ΜΑΡΙΑ Η ΕΥΣΕΒΕΣΤΑΤΗ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΑ ΑΓΓΕΛΙΝΑ ΚΟΜΝΗΝΗ ΔΟΥΚΕΝΑ Η ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΝΑ', 'The most pious *basilissa,* Maria Angelina Komnene Douk[ai]na Palaiologina' (fig.3.16).[11] She also described herself as such, with minor changes to spelling and family name, on the Cuenca Diptych, as 'the *basilissa*, Maria Angelina Doukai[n]a Palaiolo[gina]' (fig.3.17).[12] On both of the icons, her image was then represented beneath the inscriptions, venerating the Virgin Mary and Christ Child. By adopting and representing herself as the *basilissa*, within such a medium as an icon and the context of close association with divine figures, Maria Angelina was thus clearly connected with and, perhaps more importantly, associating herself with traditional Byzantine models of rule, appropriating titular, associative, and naming conventions.

It should also be pointed out that the main source for the life of Maria Angelina, the *Chronicle of Ioannina*, written during and after her lifetime, also referred to her as the 'εύσεβεστάτη βασίλισσα', the 'most pious *basilissa*'.[13] As

[11] L. Deriziotis, cat. 24b, in A.-M. Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', pp.51-2, provide the exact lettering of the inscription.
[12] A. Weyl Carr, cat. 24c, in A.-M. Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', pp.52-4, provide the exact lettering of the inscription.
[13] For example, *Chronicle Ioannina*, 86, 16.24-5. The work by Laonikos Chalkokondyles, written over a century later, mentioned Maria Angelina as immoral and lecherous: *Chalk.* 212.

discussed, texts such as the *Chronicle* were not sanctioned by the imperial machine, and thus were able to use whatever titles thought most appropriate to suit their particular agenda; this text was written in clearly hostile terms towards Maria Angelina's first husband, Thomas, but regarded Maria Angelina much more positively. It could be argued that Maria Angelina was given such a high status by the author to indicate her positive traits and nobility, which comparatively then swayed the audience to hold an even more negative perception of Thomas. However, taken together, her depiction in the *Chronicle* and her self-assumed titles chosen on the Cuenca Diptych and the reliquary icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child could lead to the conclusion that *basilissa* was at least a title that Maria Angelina and the elite circle of Ioannina used during her lifetime.

11.1.1. Family Names

As well as titulature, it is useful to survey the family names used in the icon inscriptions on which Maria Angelina was represented. As discussed, the family names of empresses, and elite women, became increasingly complex during this period.[14] Unlike the example seen with Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina in the previous case study, however, it should be noted that both patronymical and matronymical surnames could be used: Maria Angelina traced back on both sides of her family tree to clearly link herself to Byzantine imperial families, expressing her status as an empress through her lineage.

[14] Family names seemed to become much more common from the tenth century onwards, and especially in the eleventh century: A. Kazhdan, 'The Formation of Byzantine Family Names in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *Byzantinoslavica* 43.1 (1997), pp.90-109. My thanks go to Joseph Parsonage for this reference.

Through her family connections she was related – sometimes quite distantly – to four of the imperial families of Byzantium. Through her parents, Symeon Uroš and Thomais Orsini, of the *despotate* of Epiros, in Thessaly and she could trace back to Michael VIII Palaiologos; Symeon was the son of Maria Palaiologina, the great-granddaughter of Michael VIII Palaiologos, and Stefan Uroš III Dečanski. Through her maternal line, she could link to both the Komnenian and Doukai family.

The 'Angelina' part of her name could have come about in two ways;[15] she could have either been referring to her distant kinship to Isaak II Angelos through her paternal line – though this seems unlikely as it was so far removed – or through her maternal great-grandfather, Andronikos Angelos Palaiologos, or maternal great-grandmother, Maria Komnene Doukaina Angelina, the daughter of Nikephoros I Komnenos Doukas of Epiros, who was mentioned earlier in relation to St Theodora of Arta. Hence, it could be argued that Maria Angelina was distinctly attempting to capitalise on these familial, if somewhat distant, relationships, imbuing her reign with a sense of legitimacy through her bloodline, through connections with the current imperial family in Constantinople and the great imperial houses of the Byzantine past. This was a tool utilised as early as the fifth century by imperial women of the Western Roman Empire: Galla Placidia's building programme in Rome and Ravenna, particularly the church dedicated to St John the Evangelist, and Anicia Juliana's Church of St Polyeuktos in Constantinople both chose to include inscriptions which placed a great emphasis on their imperial forebears.[16]

[15] See Appendix 1.6.
[16] Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena', pp.53-6, provides an overview of and analyses the building projects and recorded inscriptions of the female members of the Western Roman Empire from the fifth to the sixth century.

11.2 Miniature Representation: Icons and Innovations

Three icons, two of which are now found in the Monastery of Resurrection in Meteora, Greece, and one of which is in a museum in Cuenca, Spain, are of particular interest to this chapter. All three have been convincingly argued to have been commissioned by Maria Angelina between 1367-1384; she later donated two of the icons to her brother, John Uroš Nemanjic, known by his monastic name, Joasaph, and was a monk belonging to Meteora Monastery.[17] Remarkably, they all featured images of Maria Angelina and her husband, Thomas, though in the instance of the Icon of the Doubting Thomas, this is in doubt, and in the Cuenca Diptych Thomas appears to have been purposefully erased from the icon. The amount of effort and wealth that would have gone into the creation of these icons that Maria Angelina donated can attest to her want to build a reputation for piety and capitalise upon it, a format which can also be seen in the titles and names used in the last section.

11.2.1 Cuenca Diptych

The first commission of Maria Angelina's icon which will be examined is the now-named Cuenca Diptych, which currently resides in the Diocesan Museum, Cuenca (fig.3.17). Though it is unclear how the icon made its way to Spain, it has been suggested that the icon may have been sent west by Esau Buondelmonti, Maria Angelina's second husband, whose family originated in Florence.[18] The diptych was certainly a luxury item; the materials used in its creation and decoration included gold and silver gilt, and 954 pearls and 312

[17] Weyl Carr, 'Images: Expressions', p.146. Although the main monastery of Meteora is not in the city of Ioannina or its immediate countryside, it is only 64 miles away.
[18] A. Weyl Carr, cat. 24c, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', pp.52-3.

other precious stones, though far fewer now remain on the diptych.[19] Both panels are framed by images of saints, with the central section representing Maria Angelina in *proskynesis* before the Virgin and Christ Child to the left panel – and notably in the position of honour, if taking Byzantine conventions into account – and Thomas venerating Christ on the right panel. It has been suggested by several scholars that Thomas' image was destroyed sometime after his assassination as he was so despised as a ruler.[20] By depicting herself in a position of veneration, situated directly next to the holy figures of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child, Maria Angelina showed an intention to be, first of all, recognised as the sponsor of this icon, but also to be seen in association with these divine figures. The positioning of Maria Angelina within the icon, as well as the expense of the diptych, indicated her piety and devotion, but also signposted divine approval for her rule, as has been seen in many instances of this series of case studies. The multi-faceted depiction also indicated as to why an opponent of Thomas may have felt it appropriate to remove his image from the close vicinity of Christ on the right panel: through his obvious removal, it could have been intended to indicate divine disapproval instead.

11.2.2 Reliquary Icon

The second icon is an example of a piece that functioned as both an icon and a reliquary; the image in the centre is that of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child, with Maria Angelina kneeling before the pair, and the surrounding frame contains the images of the busts of fourteen saints, with small slots at the

[19] A. Weyl Carr, cat. 24c, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', p.53. There are only 67 gemstones and 939 pearls remaining on the icon currently.
[20] A. Weyl Carr, cat. 24c, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', p.53.

bottom of each saint for the placement of their relics (fig.3.16).[21] The incorporation of relics into an icon was rare during this period, and it has been inferred by previous scholars that the expertise and materials required would have had to be acquired in Constantinople, resulting in the expensive and time-consuming production of this icon.[22] Maria Angelina was again depicted in the central scene and although somewhat abraded, can be seen to be elaborately dressed and crowned. She was portrayed as venerating the Virgin Mary and Christ Child in the position of honour, with Thomas venerating from the opposite side. The inscription was also placed above Maria Angelina's image and not Thomas', again indicating her position as being the figure in the position of higher status. It could also be suggested that this depicted positioning underlined the legitimising link that Maria Angelina provided Thomas: Thomas' access to this position – both pictorially and metaphorically – was contingent on the elevated status of Maria Angelina. As with the previous icon, the expense and effort put into creating such a piece, the visual hierarchy indicated by position and inscription, and the terminology used – both *basilissa* and family names – showed her social standing, her personal sponsorship of the icon, and how she wished to be viewed by the intended audience.

11.2.3 Icon of Doubting Thomas

The last item to be examined is the Icon of the Doubting Thomas (fig.3.18), also held at the Monastery of Transfiguration in Meteora, which

[21] L. Deriziotis, cat. 24b, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', pp.51-2. As the icon has dimensions of only 39cm by 29.5cm, it should be noted that there would only have been space for smaller relics, such as fragments of bone, though none of these relics are now extant.
[22] A. Weyl Carr, cat. 24c, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', p.53.

depicted the canonical scene of the disbelief of the Apostle Thomas in Christ's resurrection, (John 20:26-9). Although not identified by name on the icon itself, it has been convincingly argued by several scholars that Maria Angelina was not only the patron of this icon but was also portrayed in the scene in which the resurrected Christ appeared before Doubting Thomas and the rest of the disciples, grouped around the central figures.[23] Christ's pose, moving over to the right with arm outstretched towards Maria Angelina, who was depicted leaning into the gesture, interacting with Christ, has been argued to be innovative and 'unique' within Byzantine art.[24]

This icon and its positioning could be compared with the Icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy (fig.3.25),[25] but while it is true that an empress is being situated within a religious context that is depicted on an icon, the two are not overly similar. The Doubting Thomas icon is innovative in this instance as Maria Angelina has had her own image inserted into the icon and is actively involved in a biblical scene, rather than a record of an event with its associated

[23] This was first determined by Xyngopoulos: see A. Xyngopoulos, 'Νέαι προσωπογραφίαι τής Μαρίας Παλαιολογίνας καί τού Θωμά Πρελιούμποβιτς', *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias* 4 (1964), pp.53-67.

[24] N. Patterson-Ševčenko, 'The Representation of Donors and Holy Figures on Four Byzantine Icons', *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias* 17 (1994), pp.157-64, pp.162-3. Patterson-Ševčenko argued that, although there are instances where the patron has been identified as inserting their facial features onto figures in religious scenes (Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos as King Abgar, in the Mandylion Icon, Mount Sinai; Constantine IX Monomachos as Solomon in the Anastasis mosaic of Nea Mone, Chios), this was the first time that a patron was obviously placed in a religious context, and acted within it. See K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of St Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Icons, Volume I: From the Sixth to the Tenth Century* (Princeton, 1976), specifically p.96 for Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos; & D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics of Nea Mone on Chios* (Athens, 1985), specifically pp.137-8 for Constantine IX Monomachos. As Gargova asserted, the only other woman who was depicted within this context was the Theotokos: Gargova, 'The Meteora Icon', p.373.

[25] The Icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy features two distinct layers of figures associated with the overthrow of Iconoclasm in 843: the bottom depicts iconophile saints, largely clergy. The upper register depicts the Hodegetria Icon, surrounded by Patriarch Methodios and other iconophiles to the right, and, to the left, Empress Theodora, who was remembered as instrumental in ending the controversy, and her son, Michael III, for whom she was regent: British Museum, London, inv.1988,0411.1.

participants. This icon is also different because of its dynamic: while Theodora is shown as passively standing next to the Hodegetria icon, Maria Angelina is actively involved. She is placing herself within a scene that, unlike Theodora, she is not associated with, but is displaying herself as such regardless. These are two very different modes of representations of empresses, with different messaging and expressions of piety – one is retroactive, the other is active; one is commemoration, the other is interpolation.

Significantly, not only are Maria Angelina and Thomas depicted on the icon, but they are shown amongst the disciples, with Maria Angelina in front of her husband and being actively blessed by Christ. Iconographically, this scene is reminiscent of Byzantine crowning scenes, which had been in use since at least the fifth century, shown by the marriage coins issued of Pulcheria and Marcian (450), and of Ariadne and Anastasios (491).[26] Crowning scenes with Christ and imperial persons, usually imperial couples, were also seen in the mid-Byzantine period, particularly seen on ivory panels and in manuscript miniatures.[27] The *manus dei* should also be interpreted in a similar way: as discussed in the previous chapter, the *manus dei* started to come back into use with female figures in around the thirteenth century.[28] As shown, the depicted line of sight was also an important facet of Byzantine iconography; in the icon, Christ was portrayed as looking directly as Maria Angelina, again emphasising her central role in the icon. Thus, with minor exceptions, this icon gives an example of the first time that a non-divine female was blessed and crowned by

[26] See Chapter Two: Aelia Ariadne and Chapter Three: Theodora for discussions on the formulation and background of marriage coins.
[27] Marriage coins, for example, of Eudokia Makrembolitissa, first with Michael VI Doukas and then Nikephoros III Botaniates, are known from the middle Byzantine period.
[28] See Chapter Two: Aelia Ariadne for earlier depictions of the *manus dei*.

the figure of Christ, highlighting Maria Angelina's pious nature and legitimacy, and also showing true innovation iconographically, which further underlined her status.

While most scholars agree that Maria Angelina donated this piece to the monastery, as she did for the Icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child, it has recently been argued that this icon was created and donated on her behalf, after her death.[29] If the figure behind Maria Angelina was her first husband Thomas, it would be unlikely that the icon was created on her behalf, after her death, due to Thomas' assassination, her subsequent remarriage, and his negative reputation. Yet, it has not been convincingly argued that this figure, which looks directly at the viewer, was Thomas. Though, canonically, there should only be eleven disciples represented in the crowd – as Judas had betrayed Jesus and then committed suicide (Matthew 27:1-5) – and there are twelve figures in this icon, a subsequent attribution to Thomas is not clear, as there are comparative materials which also show twelve disciples.[30] If this was intended to be a male figure associated with Maria Angelina, the identity could also be her second husband, Esau, or her brother Joasaph, which is also logical as the icon was donated to the monastery where he lived.

Regardless, it is the female figure of Maria Angelina that captures the eye of the viewer, in terms of positioning, action, and decorative schema. The imperial red of her costume, for instance, is striking amongst the dark colours of the Apostles. It is she, interacting with Christ, that is the significant figure

[29] Gargova, 'The Meteora Icon', pp.371-2, for an overview of this topic.
[30] L. Deriziotis, cat. 24a, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', p.51. Patterson-Ševčenko, 'Four Byzantine Icons', p.164, also argued against the commissioning of this icon in commemoration of Thomas' death; for one, Maria Angelina was not depicted in mourning clothes.

here. This was further underlined by Patterson-Ševčenko who argued that it was Maria Angelina's devotion to Christ that was being highlighted. As a figure 'far removed in time' in terms of dress, Patterson-Ševčenko argued that the female figure was emphasising the contention that she did not need to see Christ's resurrection to have faith; as Christ was written to have said to Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29).[31] Here, Patterson-Ševčenko interpreted the representations portrayed in the icon within the context of the canonical scene, as an Orthodox Christian audience might have done; presumably they would have been aware of the significance of the message of Christ from these verses.

Recently, Gargova has argued that the Icon of the Doubting Thomas, and Maria Angelina's role within it, had a regional impact on the artisanal output from this period on.[32] First of all, Gargova put forward the view that this female figure was actually the Theotokos; as had been seen in previous depictions of this scene, the Theotokos has appeared in her role as Maria Regina, and thus Maria Angelina, as the patron, could be acting as a 'disguised donor'.[33] It would certainly not be unusual for an imperial female figure to be elided with a divine female figure or closely associated with them, as was seen with Roman and Late Antique female representations on coins, but Maria Angelina would probably be the first to do so with the Virgin Mary. It should be noted that no convincing suggestions have been made that an emperor would attempt to elide himself

[31] Patterson-Ševčenko 'Four Byzantine Icons', p.164.
[32] Gargova, 'The Meteora Icon', pp.377-80. Agoritsas, however, argued against this and suggested that there were earlier models that may have influenced later frescoes: D. C. Agoritsas, 'Maria Angelina Doukaina Palaiologina', p.181.
[33] Gargova, 'The Meteora Icon', pp.374-5.

with the figure of Christ, and this might be thought inappropriate in a Byzantine Orthodox context; the same is arguably true of the Theotokos. However, Gargova was convincing in arguing that this icon had a broad regional impact and was copied a further six times, which are extant, in Epiros and Thessaly: the frescoes of the Doubting Thomas in Hagios Nikoloas ton Philanthropion Monastery, Ioannina island, in 1542; Barlaam Monastery, Meteora, in 1548, particularly the costume of the female figure and the position of the female and Christ figure, both of which seem to be almost identical with the original icon (fig.3.19); Hosios Nikanoras Monastery, Zavorda, in 1592 (fig.3.20); Hagia Triada Monastery, Meteora, 1692; Church of Hagia Theodora, Arta, in the late-seventeenth to early-eighteenth century; and Tsoukas Monastery, near Ioannina, in 1779.[34]

Additionally, Maria Angelina's three icons could be compared with the earlier icon patronised by the Serbian queen, Jelena of Anjou, who commissioned a large icon in the latter half of the thirteenth century, which was heavily influenced by Byzantine models (fig.3.11). The French-born, Catholic empress and subsequent regent for her sons, Milutin and Dragutin, donated the icon of Saint Peter and Paul to the Vatican, specifically the Pope, Nicholas IV.[35] The icon was separated into three sections: Saint Peter and Paul are in the large top section and are being venerated by the two royal brothers below them. In between the brothers in a central position is Jelena, being blessed by a saint. She was bent in supplication to a figure which resembles a Roman bishop, and was arguably the incumbent pope's namesake, Saint

[34] Gargova, 'The Meteora Icon', pp.377-81.
[35] Weyl Carr 'Images: Expressions', p.146.

Nicholas.[36] So though her sons are portrayed according to Byzantine and Orthodox traditions, wearing Byzantine imperial regalia and venerating the two large saints at the top of the register, Jelena is depicted being blessed by a figure with Catholic connotations. The Serbian royal sons, Dragutin, the abdicated monarch, and Milutin, the current king, were given a secondary role as, though they are somewhat larger in size, Jelena is a central figure.[37] Jelena even had a different colour scheme highlighting her scene, whereas the sons are in the same shades and represented in the corners. Constantine Akropolites and his wife, Maria, were also represented on the silver revetment of an icon, but in this case were clearly portrayed outside the icon, venerating the saint from a suitable distance (fig.3.21).[38] Thus, although some minor innovations were being made in this period, there was nothing like the innovative actions of Maria Angelina, who can be seen to have acted dynamically within a canonical scene, actively being blessed by Christ.

These types of icons, which displayed such a personal nature, only survive from the Late Byzantine period and, as described, Maria Angelina's were even more remarkable than those discussed previously. There are only a few other examples which have the patron, or any non-holy figure, actively participating with the figures in the icon.[39] The number and expense of the icons suggest how important they were to the patron; Maria Angelina's icons were not only a gift to her brother and his monastery but were also a portrayal of her personal piety and devotion. They also displayed her social position –

[36] B. Ratliff, cat. 23, in Talbot 'Revival and Decline', p.50.
[37] H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago, IL, 1994), p.337.
[38] E. Gladysheva, cat. 4, in Talbot 'Revival and Decline', pp.28-30.
[39] Patterson-Ševčenko, 'Four Byzantine Icons', pp.157-61, highlighted three other icons where the patron was depicted within the icon, though none was as actively involved within a scene of this nature as Maria Angelina.

even in regards to her husbands – wealth, connections to imperial families, and legitimacy and divinely approved authority.

Conclusion

Overall, it can be seen that Maria Angelina was one of a growing number of women who, correctly or not, were associating themselves with a variety of elements which were used to construct the identity – the easily-recognisable and legitimate brand – of the empress, the *basilissa,* throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Doing this successfully relied largely on a shared cultural memory and shared landscape of images, materials, and titles, from within and on the peripheries of the Byzantine Empire. However, there were also some clear innovations used in underlining her legitimacy and divine approval, through imagery, action, and emphasis: all of which can be seen in the Meteora Monastery Icon of the Doubting Thomas and her dynamic appearance within it. Thus, the representations of Maria Angelina encapsulated the office of the Byzantine empress, particularly in its form in this century; she was at once continuing the traditions and conventions of its form, but also transforming it to emphasise and work specifically within her own context.

Chapter Twelve: Helena Dragaš

Helena Dragaš was a princess of Serbia, the *despoina* of Morea, the empress of, and then the empress dowager of, Byzantium during her long life. Born c.1372, she was the daughter of the magnate of Serbia, Konstantine Dejanović – who was an Ottoman vassal by the late fourteenth century – and Eudokia of Trebizond. Eudokia, in turn, was the daughter of Alexios III Komnenos of Trebizond and Theodora Kantakouzene; thus, Helena's grandparents are also known to us through images.[1] Helena was married to Manuel II Palaiologos in 1392, with whom she had possibly two daughters and at least seven sons, including Emperor John VIII (1425-48) and the last emperor of the Byzantine Empire, Constantine XI Palaiologos (1449-53). When her husband died in 1425, she was the empress dowager for two of her sons, and entered into the Monastery of Kyra Martha in Constantinople, taking the monastic name Hypomone until her death in 1450.[2]

There are very few other women in this century who might also have been suitable for this case study, but include figures such as Maria-Mara Branković, the daughter of the Serbian Đurađ – also known as George – Branković and Eirene Kantakouzene, whose image, alongside her family, is preserved in the Esphigmenou Charter.[3] Maria-Mara was married to the Sultan Murad II,

---

[1] A. Bryer, 'Greeks and Turkmens: The Pontic Exception', *DOP* 29 (1975), p.113-48, pp.134-6. Depictions of Alexios III Megas Komnene and Theodora Komnene Kantakouzene of Trebizond appeared in the Chrysobull of Dionysiu, Mt Athos, and a later illustrated copy of a fresco in Panagia Theoskepastos, Trebizond, by a C. Texier in the nineteenth century: Spatharakis, *Portrait*, pp.184-7, fig.136, 139 respectively.

[2] In the Greek Orthodox Church, her feast day is combined with that of Constantine XI Palaiologos and the commemoration of the Fall of Constantinople on 29th May.

[3] D. M. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor: The Life and Legend of Constantine Palaiologos, Last Emperor of the Romans* (Cambridge, 1992), p.110. Nicol described her as being the daughter of Đurađ's first wife, who was a distant cousin of John IV Megas Komnenos of Trebizond (1429-60). The Esphigmenou Charter was an illuminated chrysobull issued by Maria-Mara's father in 1429 to the Esphigmenou Monastery, Mount Athos, though it is now kept in the Vatican, as the Masarelli Vatican manuscript: Spatharakis, *Portrait*, p.188.

though doubts have been cast on whether the marriage was ever consummated, and, after his death, she apparently rejected an offer of marriage from Constantine XI Palaiologos.[4] Yet Helena's position and involvement in the reigns of both her husband and her son, and her representation in two types of media make her an ideal candidate for this case study. What is also significant in this case study is that the images of Helena could have been used as part of a gift – certainly in the case of her representation in an illuminated manuscript miniature. As several contemporary writers noted after 1453, the empire had begun with a Constantine and his mother, Helena, and it had ended in the hands of a Constantine, with a mother also called Helena; aptly illustrated in the Codex Mutinenis, where the line of emperors does not end with Constantine XI, but with a labelled image of Constantine the Great.[5] As then with the Byzantine Empire, the series of case studies of this work start with one Helena, in the fourth century, and ends with another, Helena Dragaš, in the fifteenth.

Helena appeared to have been active in public life throughout her adult life, as empress, dowager, and nun, until her death;[6] she lived until she was

---

[4] Georgios Sphrantzes, Χρονικόν, ed. V. Grecu, *Memorii 1401-1477* (Bucharest, 1966), trans. M. Carroll, *The Sphrantzes Chronicle: A Contemporary Greek Source for the Siege of Constantinople, 1453* (Amsterdam, 1985): Sphrantzes, 221B/364G.

[5] Patriarch Gennadios, Nicolo Barbaro, the *Letters* of Isidore and Kritoboulos, among others, noted this: Nicol, *Immortal Emperor*, pp.74-6 presents an overview of this coincidence and the reception. This manuscript was remarked upon at the 'Reconsidering the Concept of Decline and the Arts of the Palaiologan Era' symposium in Birmingham, February 2017: see Biblioteca Estense, Modena, Mutinensis gr.122, fol.294v for the leaf containing the illumination of Constantine XI and I.

[6] As seen through female-orientated *typika*, once one had entered into the monastic life, leaving the monastery was largely prohibited and could be subject to specific regulations: *Bebaia Elpis,* 72, 75-7, pp.1544-6; *Lips,* 15, p.1270 – though *Bebaia Elpis* was less strict overall than *Lips*. It is perhaps surprising therefore that despite being a nun, Helena was involved in public life. But the *Lips typikon* also makes it clear that the women of the imperial family are to be exempt from certain rules and given special treatment, so there is clearly leeway available to those with the status to ensure it: *Lips,* 16, p.1270, 40-1, p.1278. There are also examples from the eleventh and twelfth centuries of nuns being involved in public life, such as Maria of Antioch who 'took the veil as the nun Xene' when she became regent for her son, Alexios II Komnenos: Jeffreys, 'Piroska and the Komnenian Dynasty', pp.103-4.

well into her seventies, with Manuel II having pre-deceased her by twenty-five years. When her son, John VIII, died in 1448, Sphrantzes suggested that it was the timely intervention of Helena which prevented arguments between her other sons – Thomas had recently come back to Constantinople and, when there, learned that John had died, while Demetrios had already begun to build up a power base – and insisted that it should be Constantine, as the eldest among them, who should become emperor.[7] Constantine was *despotes* of Morea at this time, and thus Helena chose two envoys to inform him of the turn in events and he was quickly crowned in Mistra.[8] Nicol argued that this meant that Constantine must have been her favourite son; it was pointed out by him multiple times that Constantine was the only one of her sons to consistently use Helena's family name, Dragases, alongside Palaiologos.[9]

Helena also had the authority to send embassies – a party which included Georgios Sphrantzes, the main source for the activities of the imperial family in this period – to Sultan Murad II, with her name listed as first in the decree which stated that Constantine should be in power.[10] Additionally, when Constantine was struggling over his choice of bride in 1451 and with the contradictory advice that he was receiving from his nobles, he was said to have lamented that his mother was no longer living; he had no one with whom to confidentially consult on important matters such as these.[11] Helena had died in

[7] Sphrantzes, 204B/348G. Demetrios' anti-unionist attitude and dislike of the Council of Florence in 1445 certainly held sway with some of the nobles in the Byzantine court.
[8] Sphrantzes, 206B/350G. It has been suggested that there was no coronation in Constantinople owing to the danger of riots; the Council of Florence and the unionist patriarch at the time were deeply unpopular: Nicol, *Immortal Emperor*, p.37.
[9] Nicol, *Immortal Empire*, pp.4, 15 & 36. Although Nicol indicated that Constantine was her favourite and that he was 'proud' to bear her last name, he does not give evidence for the latter.
[10] Sphrantzes, 204B/348G.
[11] Sphrantzes, 221B/364G.

1450 and was buried with honours in the Monastery of Christ Pantokrator, near to Manuel II.[12] Thus it can be seen that, especially in the life of her son, Constantine, she was a significant figure with considerable influence, which, as well as her extant portraiture and potential patronage activities, makes her the perfect candidate for this study.

12.1 Miniatures

The last certifiably identifiable image of a Byzantine empress is that of Helena in a manuscript miniature, portrayed with her family (fig.3.22). The manuscript, known as MS. Ivoires A53, is now held in the Musée du Louvre but prior to this, was sent as a gift to the Abbey of St Denis, Paris, by Manuel II Palaiologos after his return to Constantinople.[13] He had visited Paris during his long diplomatic journey to Western Europe to gather support against the growing threat of Sultan Bayezid's armies in the east. Though he managed to gain little in the way of support, Manuel did make an impression on those he visited, including being the only Byzantine emperor to visit the royal court in England and France.

The miniature itself largely conforms to the conventions of Byzantine portraiture, though there are some deviations: it is of a broader scope of representation than normally seen – all of Helena and Manuel's young children, at that point at least, are shown – and there are certainly some differences

[12] Sphrantzes, 210B/354G.
[13] This manuscript was featured in two large catalogues which cover Palaiologan art – Durand, *Byzance*, p.463-4; *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, wherein it was discussed three times: Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', p.20-22; Lowden, 'Manuscript Illumination', p.261; R. S. Nelson, 'Byzantium and the Rebirth of Art and Learning in Italy and France', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.515-43, p.517.

within stylistic elements of their costumes. Helena, as was conventional for the empress, was depicted as standing in the secondary position within this visual hierarchy, with Manuel and their first-born son, John VIII, taking up the first position on the right. Their next two children, Theodore and Andronikos, were portrayed in between their parents, whilst the half-figures of the Virgin and Christ Child were above them in the upper register; they blessed the imperial couple, though it should be noted that whereas the Virgin's hand certainly interacted with Manuel, her left hand merely hovered above Helena – their stance was turned more towards him as well.

Helena was portrayed in a red and gold garment with a *stemma* taller and more elaborately decorated than that of Manuel and John, whilst her other sons were dressed in simpler diadems, a red *chlamys* with golden medallions, within which were gold double-headed eagles, though all three were holding the *baion*.[14] Manuel II and John VIII are dressed identically, in a dark *sakkos* and gold *loros*, *segmenta*, and semi-spherical *stemma*, evidently costumed similarly to indicate their relationship, and the direct line of imperial succession. The black *sakkos* had been worn by emperors since the mid-fourteenth century.[15] It symbolised the mysteries of the imperial office, but had derived from the term used to describe sackcloth and was thus also associated with penance and humility.[16] Additionally, both Manuel and John were holding cross-topped sceptres, and were nimbate, as was Helena. To further indicate his status, Manuel holds the *akakia* and his was the only gaze directed at the viewer; the

[14] Spatharakis, *Portrait*, pp.140-1. There is some damage to the miniature, but this seems to be the most suitable description of their apparel.
[15] One such example is John VI Kantakouzenos (1347-54): *BnF* Ms.gr.1242, fol.5v & fol.123v.
[16] Pseudo-Kodinos, 356.

other members of the family are distinctly gaze off to the side. Thus, the imperial family seemed to be divided into two imperial sections; the emperor and his heir are dressed identically in the position of honour – though Manuel had some key items to highlight his seniority – and the empress and her sons are dressed in matching colours to group them together as well, indicating their familial association, and yet all are underlined as being part of the imperial family.

12.1.1 Idealisations and Innovations

There have been some arguments for this image being an exact replication of Manuel's face, rather than the usual idealisation of the office: as with his representation in the monody of his brother, Theodore, Manuel was shown with blue eyes, a long nose, arched brows and a long, two-pronged beard.[17] Unfortunately, there are no other representations of Helena that are certain to be her and also detailed enough to act as comparative material. On examining the facial features of the two children in the middle, however, they seem to be very similar in terms of physiognomy, though arguments could be made for Andronikos being of a slimmer face than Theodore, perhaps indicating youthfulness, with more emphasised eyebrows. Generally speaking, however, they are not as distinctly different – and thus recognisable – as their father. I would argue that the same is likely true for Helena as well. Even though Manuel has a recognisable portraiture 'brand', it does not mean that this image

[17] Spatharakis, *Portrait,* pp.141-2. There are three copies of the monody that Manuel wrote for his brother's funeral, but only one has a portrait of Manuel II inserted into it: *BnF* Supplément gr.309, fol.6r. However, comparison to the ivory pyxis, which will be explored in the next section of this case study, would indicate that this iconographic style may just have indicated the emperor at this juncture: the two imperial male figures look the same.

was not still idealised or that the other members of the family were portrayed in a similar fashion. Thus, this manuscript still portrayed the office of the empress as an idealised image.

Yet, there are some significant innovations: the oldest of their children and their heir, John VIII, appeared in the furthest right position of this image, and therefore was situated in the position of honour, perhaps more so than his father – though this is mitigated somewhat by the difference in size and the distinction in titles. Furthermore, Manuel appears to be depicted with a figure on the bottom of his *sakkos* (fig.3.22.a).[18] This type of figural representation certainly reminds of fifth- and sixth-century clothing decorations, such as the ivories which featured imperial figures on the *tablion* and consular diptychs wherein there were imperial figures atop the sceptres.[19] Based on what details can still been distinguished, the figure was meant to represent an emperor. Though unfortunately quite damaged, it can be seen that the figure was depicted wearing a red costume, rounded *stemma*, and potentially with *pendilia* and facial hair. Although there was the space for it, it does not seem likely that there was a matching figure on the other side of Manuel's *sakkos*, though again the material is quite degraded. Comparative images do not feature such figures, and do not commonly have the trefoil shape attached to the hem of the *sakkos*.[20] Even within this image, John VIII, who was dressed identically to his

[18] I have not yet seen any scholarship discuss the small figure on this miniature.
[19] There are also descriptions of this type of clothing in texts: for example, see Theophanes, AM 6015, p.257, for the description of Tzathios, an emperor of the Lazi, including an image of Justin I (518-27) on both his tunic and his cloak, to symbolise his loyalty to the emperor. This was after Tzathios had revolted from the Persians, taken a Roman wife, been baptised as a Christian, and proclaimed by Justin as his son.
[20] The portrait of Manuel II included in his brother's monody (*BnF* Supplément gr.309, fol.6r) does include the trefoil decoration, but other examples from this period do not include it: the dual portrait of John VI Kantakouzenos (1347-54) in his role as emperor, *BnF* Ms.gr.1242, fol.123v and his portrait presiding over a synod in the same manuscript on fol.5v; images of Alexios III of Trebizond on chrysobull and mosaic; the imperial male

father, was not depicted with either the trefoil design or the miniature figure. Thus, it must be that this figure was associative for the emperor specifically, perhaps an important figure during his reign, such as his cousin John VII, his father, John V Palaiologos (1341-91), or it could be referring back to an imperial figure such as Michael VIII, as the progenitor of their line, or to Constantine I, to further emphasise their imperial associations.

Manuel, and other Palaiologan emperors, had made allusions to Constantine within their representations in other instances, and his reputation still endured within the cultural memory of the city.[21] Manuel, for example, had depictions of Constantine and Helena, with the True Cross between them, on the obverse of some types of his base metal coinage.[22] If this particular representation on Manuel's *sakkos* was of Constantine, however, it might be considered unusual for him to be depicted without Helena; in the Byzantine Empire and its peripheries, it was the norm for them to appear together. That Constantine was also known in the West as a figure of great renown, can be

figures on the Dumbarton Oaks pyxis, see 12.2: Ivories for discussion. On elite clothing, note the seated figures on the hats of males in the *typikon* of Lincoln College, gr.35: John Synadenos, fol.2r, Manuel Asen, fol.5r, Constantine Raoul, fol.6r, Theodore Synadenos, fol.8r. There are also several extant instances of figural imagery on ecclesiastical garments: W. Woodfin, 'Liturgical Textiles', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.295-333, pp.299-303.

[21] In 1411, a letter of Manuel Chrysoloras to John VIII, during the reign of his father, mentioned Constantine, referring to him as a great builder who set up Christian statues which surpassed all others, and as the 'guardian' of the city: Manuel Chrysoloras, *Epistles*, *PG* 156, 45ff; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), pp.250-3: *Epist. M.C.,* 1.

[22] *DOC V.I*, cat. 78, & *DOC V.II,* cat. 1599. Manuel was not, however, the first to do this. Alexios III Angelos (1195-1203) displayed Constantine on his coinage consistently: *DOC IV.I*, cat. 1-3. The figures of Constantine and Helena also appeared on coin issues of the Latin kingdom of Thessaloniki during the thirteenth century: A. G. Malloy, I. F. Preston & A. J. Seltman, *Coins of the Crusader States, 1098-1291* (Fairfield, CT, 2004, 2nd ed), pp.330-4, cat. 28, 30; M. F. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol IV, Part II: The Emperors of Nicaea and their Contemporaries (1204-1261)* (Washington D.C., 1999): *DOC IV.II,* pp.668-9, cat. 26, 28.

seen from the medallion bearing his image, which was created c.1400.[23] Due to the correct titular on the legend of the medallion, it has been argued that Manuel's visit to the West at the turn of the century either inspired or simply coincided with its creation, giving the medallion a more specific date.[24]

12.1.2 Nomenclature

Another significant aspect of this depiction is that Helena was not only described as the *augusta* but also as the *autokratorissa.* Outside of this example, there were very few women whose images are titled as such; one such example was Maria Doukaina, also known as Maria of Alania – the empress in the late eleventh century, wife to Michael VII and then Nikephoros III Botaneiates after his successful usurpation – who was described as *autokratorissa* in the illuminated manuscript *BnF* Coisl. 79 (fig.2.34).[25] Anna of Savoy also used the title *autokratorissa* on her seals (fig.3.14) and, as has already been discussed, Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina was recorded as having used the title on a mosaic (fig.3.10). As with these earlier examples, *autokratorissa* was normally awarded to the figure of the empress when the emperor also used it.[26] *Autokrator* was a term used alongside *basileus* on coinage from the tenth century, chrysobulls from the eleventh, and in mosaics and miniatures from at least the mid-eleventh. In the Palaiologan period,

[23] S. K. Scher, cat. 323a, in Nelson, 'Rebirth of Art', pp.537-9. Scher argued for an early fifteenth-century date for this medallion, and for a stylistically similar medallion of Herakleios, both of which were created with legends in Greek on them.
[24] S. K. Scher, cat. 323a, in Nelson, 'Rebirth of Art', pp.538-9. Scher suggested that one of Manuel's court advised on the nomenclature.
[25] Spatharakis, *Portrait*, p.238. *BnF* Coisl. 79, fol. 1v. She was shown with her husband, Nikephoros III, though it has been argued that this portrait was originally labelled as Michael VII, her previous husband.
[26] See Chapter Ten: Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina for the other uses.

however, this term was also used to denote co-emperors: the sons and heirs of the emperor.[27] Thus, it could be suggested that the feminine form of this title was used in this particular context because of Helena's position as wife and mother in the imperial family. Just as in the fourth century, when Helena, her contemporaries and successors, were being shown as the personification of security and peace for the empire through the life of her son Constantine, the Helena in the fifteenth century was being depicted as the protector and security for the continuation of the Palaiologan dynasty and the empire: through her, and Manuel, the children present in this illumination would become the next rulers of the Byzantine Empire.

12.1.3 Purpose

The miniature was affixed as the frontispiece of a manuscript that contained the works of Dionysius the Areopagite, homonymous with the patron saint of the abbey to which it was given as a gift; no doubt that was why this particular manuscript, originally commissioned in the 1330s, was chosen to be re-used.[28] It has been argued that it was rare for the rulers of this later period to commission manuscripts due to a lack of funds; the re-use of manuscripts, this one in particular, has been used as evidence to indicate the perilous financial situation that the Palaiologans found themselves to be in.[29] As well as this, the background was of a neutral colour and not decorated with gold leaf as

[27] Pseudo-Kodinos, 252, 24-253, 2.
[28] Spatharakis, *Portrait*, p.139-43; Kalopissi-Verti, 'Patronage and Artistic Production', p.77. Manuel sent the gift with his ambassador, Manuel Chrysoloras, four years after he initially stayed in Paris in 1400-1.
[29] Kalopissi-Verti, 'Patronage and Artistic Production', p.77. See H. Belting, *Das Illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft* (Hiedelburg, 1970), for further discussion on this.

one might expect of a Byzantine imperial portrait, though gold leaf was used on other sections of the miniature scene. Further evidence of this type of 're-gifting' is provided by the icon given by Manuel II to Duke Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan: the gift was an overpainted icon of the Virgin Mary, originally commissioned by Manuel Dishypatos in the early- to mid-thirteenth century.[30]

However, perhaps this particular manuscript was selected, less because it served a purpose on a tight budget, but because it was an item worth collecting; it must have been considered an appropriate gift to send to the court-monastery of a distant, yet potentially allied, polity who had chosen not to support the Byzantines through their clashes with the encroaching armies. Furthermore, it has been noted that the collection, copying, and updating of older manuscripts was fashionable in the late Palaiologan period and thus, again, may have been sent as a gift as a sign of their high regard.[31] It seems unlikely that the emperor – who was trying to both impress and to rally support – would send a sub-standard gift with an image of himself and his family attached to it; especially one which outlined the imperial and impressive status of himself, the empress, his son and heir, and his two younger sons. It was also asserted by Hilsdale that this gift was chosen specifically because it mirrored an earlier gift: Michael II (820-9) gave the Abbey of St Denis a ninth-century copy of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* that was kept in the abbey library.[32] This would surely suggest that Manuel sent this copy of the manuscript to remind the

[30] M. Vassilaki, 'Praying for the Salvation of the Empire?', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), pp.263-74 pp.265-7, 270. The icon is now in the Diözesanmuseum, Freising.
[31] Lowden, 'Manuscript Illumination', pp.264-6.
[32] Hilsdale, *Art and Diplomacy*, pp.238-9. The manuscript is now known as *BnF* Ms.gr.437.

audience of the historic ties that the two polities had, in his bid for support against the enemies that faced Byzantium.

It must also be wondered as to whether the intended audience would have understood the nuances of the gift. It could be argued that due to Manuel's recent visit to Paris – and that Manuel waited until he could send his ambassador with the gift – the audience would have recognised the manuscript as an imperial, diplomatic gift. During his trip to the West, Manuel also gifted several relics to the courts and powers that he met there: as has been argued, he was aware of the role that gifting relics could play in international diplomacy.[33] Additionally, as Manuel visited St Denis with King Charles VI of France several times, he would also have known that this monastery was attached to the French court, and that Charles and his courtiers would have become aware of the gift and its portrait from proximity, if not specially shown the gift;[34] there surely is little doubt that Charles would have seen it, given his constant presence at the monastery.

In terms of the audience understanding the messages conveyed, even if Greek was a little-known language in the West at this time – and it has been indicated that Charles did not speak it fluently, and neither did Manuel speak French fluently, as the use of interpreters suggests –[35] the costumed and divinely blessed figures certainly indicated that this was an imperial portrait. Furthermore, the Constantine medallion, and also one bearing the image of

[33] Dendrinos, 'Manuel II Palaeologos in Paris (1400-1402): Theology, Diplomacy and Politics', in M. Hinterberger & C. Schabel (eds.), *Greeks, Latins and Intellectual History, 1204-1500* (Leuven, 2011), pp.397-422, p.403: Manuel gave a piece of fabric from Christ's robe that healed the haemorrhaging woman (Mark 5:25-34) to several polities, as well as fragments of the True Cross.
[34] Dendrinos, 'Manuel II in Paris', p.410.
[35] Dendrinos, 'Manuel II in Paris', p.401.

Herakleios as the restorer of the True Cross, should be reflected on again to inform us further here: the Greek in the legends may be clumsy but in general terms they show that, in this period in the West, there was an understanding of titular hierarchy from Byzantium.[36] Thus, even though this manuscript was sent to be used within a monastic context, it could certainly be argued that Manuel was aware that King Charles VI would see it, and recognise the portrait for what it was: an imperial Christian family, divinely chosen and blessed, and steeped in the tradition of the Roman-Byzantine Empire, connecting all the way back to the time of Constantine I, and thus the inheritors and protectors of Christianity.

12.2 Ivories

There have also been suggestions that Helena's image can found on a small ivory pyxis, now located in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (fig.3.23.a). The pyxis is extremely small – only 4.2cm in diameter by 3cm in height – and is made of ivory with an intricately carved figural scene around the outside.[37] Sixteen figures encircled the outside of the object, beginning with a line of musicians, both seated and standing, and playing a variety of images; a drummer, flutist, harpist, two trumpeters, a lute player, and a syrinx player.[38] They anticipate two dancing women, one with arms akimbo, the other holding a scarf behind her head, and a kneeling, non-imperial male figure, offering a city

[36] S. K. Scher, cat. 323a, in Nelson, 'Rebirth of Art', pp.537-9.
[37] Dumbarton Oaks Collection, inv. BZ.1936.24.
[38] C. Currie, 'Glorious Noise of Empire', in A. Öztürkmen & E. B. Vitz (eds.), *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Turnhout, 2014), pp.425-49.

– rendered in the Byzantine manner of a miniature fortification –[39] with a peacock below (fig.23.b). The last part of this scene is two groups of imperial figures: each consisted of a bearded emperor and an empress, with a youthful male figure (fig.23.c). All of the figures from this last scene are nimbate, wear the *loros*, and are usually crowned. Additionally, the figures are depicted holding sceptres, whereas only the male figures hold the *akakia*. The solemn and static configuration of the imperial portrayal is in sharp contrast with the musical section, which indicates movement and celebration, presumably a procession.[40]

This is an unusual pyxis; several extant pyxides come down to us from the fifth and sixth centuries – when trade centres for ivories still existed within the sphere of the Byzantine Empire, and therefore was a much more accessible material with which to craft, though still expensive – and similar objects were usually three times as large.[41] Although there are some gaps in the provenance of this item, it was recorded in the inventory of the late fifteenth-century cardinal, Francesco Gongaza, who belonged to a family well known for their interest in collecting antiquities; he had been using it as a salt dish for some time.[42]

During the initial discussions on the object in the 1930s, Charanis identified the first imperial couple as John VI Kantakouzenos, Eirene Asanina,

[39] Another example includes the offertory mosaic in Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, where Constantine and Justinian offered miniscule versions of Constantinople and Hagia Sophia respectively to the enthroned Virgin Mary and Christ Child.
[40] Hilsdale, *Art and Diplomacy*, p.210.
[41] L. Rodley, 'The Byzantine Context', in R. Druits & A. Lymberopoulou (eds.), *Byzantine Art and Renaissance Europe* (Farnham, 2013), pp.9-35, pp.25-6.
[42] Cutler, 'From Loot to Scholarship', pp.254-5. It probably came to Gongaza through his connection with Cardinal Bessarion, known for bringing items to the West after he settled in Italy in 1439. It was acquired by the founders of Dumbarton Oaks, Mildred Barnes Bliss and Robert Woods Bliss, from Durlacher Brothers, London, 1936, and before that was recorded in the Stroganoff collection in Rome.

and their grandson, Andronikos, and in the 1960s, Grabar added to this by suggesting that the second group was John V Palaiologos, Helena Kantakouzenos and their son.[43] Weitzmann argued against the identification of this second group based on the M next to the imperial male figure: he instead suggested Matthew Kantakouzenos, crowned in 1354, was the imperial male figure with his family.[44] However, Oikonomides convincingly dated the pyxis to 1403-1404; he suggested that the scene denoted the celebration of the agreement between John VII and Manuel II concerning the share in power over the empire and John's new seat of power: Thessaloniki.[45] The imperial figures on the left, therefore, could be identified with the new emperor, John VII, with his wife, Eirene, and his son, Andronikos V Palaiologos, who were being gifted the city of Thessaloniki, as a reward for their loyal conduct during Manuel's time away, travelling to the courts of Western Medieval Europe. Consequently, the second group would then be Manuel II, with Helena, and their son, John VIII, to provide a symmetry within the visual hierarchy.

The inscriptions above the first imperial group, however, suggest tensions in these proceedings. John and his family were indicated by inscriptions – Ιω(άννης), Ἀνδρ(όνικος), Εἰρ(ήνη) – yet this was not the case for the other familial group. Manuel was merely indicated by the letter M, and the junior male and empress have been forgotten altogether - although there is a blank space, above his image. It can be seen that distinct preference had been given

[43] A. Grabar, 'Une pyxide en ivoire à Dumbarton Oaks: Quelques notes sur l'art profane pendant les derniers siècles de l'Empire byzantin', *DOP* 14 (1960), pp.121-46 pp.124-5.
[44] K. Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Volume 3: Ivories and Steatites* (Washington D.C., 1972), pp.30-1, 79, cat. 5.
[45] N. Oikonomidès, 'John VII Palaeologus and the Ivory Pyxis at Dumbarton Oaks', *DOP* 13 (1977), pp.329-37 pp.330-1. This interpretation is agreed with by Cutler: Cutler, 'From Loot to Scholarship', p.255. Rodley only mentions that a 'Palaiologan patron... commission[ed] a self-consciously archaizing piece': Rodley, 'The Byzantine Context', p.26.

to John's family, who were all named and evidently receiving the city. They are also in the position of honour, being on the right of the hierarchy. Therefore, it has been suggested by Hilsdale that this may have been commissioned by supporters of John VII, maybe as a gift for him, or for his family, as subtle levels of precedence indicated in gifts such as this, were typical: through this inference, Hilsdale also concluded that this indicated the continuation of conflict through partisan moves such as this.[46] As this is such a small pyxis, it was probably not for widespread public consumption, and was likely used in a private setting. This would make sense, however, for only those with in-depth knowledge of this context would be able to understand the references. As Hilsdale shows, Manuel and his contemporaries were aware of the dynamic of gift giving and the actions here reflect the reciprocal expectation of gift giving which 'operates within [the] ideological framework that is entirely Byzantine'.[47] And in fact, this is mirrored by Manuel's actions; he 'gifts' the city of Thessaloniki to John, along with the title of *basileus* of Thessaly, with the implicit understanding that in return John will be more amenable to Manuel's rule.[48] The giver of this pyxis, then, must also expect a similar reciprocal exchange; the subtle partisanship indicated by the scene would keep them in good stead with John, who would then return that support.

If functioning in this way and, therefore, as a politically motivated gift that showed subtle support to John over Manuel, it may have only been

---

[46] Hilsdale, *Art and Diplomacy*, pp.212-3. Subtle levels of precedence were indeed indicated in gifts: the Holy Crown of Hungary, which placed King Geza I of Hungary in a junior position to not only Michael VII Doukas (1071-8) but his son, Constantine Doukas, is a good example of this.
[47] Hilsdale, *Art and Diplomacy*, pp.208-9. In his *Dialogue on Marriage*, Manuel II was incensed by the promise of Sultan Bayezid II to 'gift' Constantinople to his brother, John VII, if he would support him: Manuel II Palaiologos, *Dialogue with the Empress-Mother on Marriage,* ed. & trans. A. Angelou (Vienna, 1991): Manuel, 98-100.
[48] Hilsdale, *Arts and Diplomacy*, p.209.

intended for a small audience as well. That the empress was placed on this small piece of ivory, within this political scenario, suggests that the commissioner and the intended audience would have seen the figure of the empress as appropriate to be in this context. The figures further underlined the imperial nature of this procession and potential contest, reciprocally indicating the imperial nature and legitimacy of both the process being undertaken and the characters within it.

12.3 Patronage

As in the previous chapters, suggestions have also been made that Helena was a patron during the time of her position as empress. The bilateral icon of the Virgin Kataphyge and the Vision of Ezekiel, for instance, found in the Monastery of St John the Theologian in Poganovo, is one such piece. The obverse depicted a scene which would remind the viewer of the crucifixion, containing John the Theologian alongside the Virgin Kataphyge, a rarely used epithet meaning asylum, while, curiously, the reverse displays the Vision of Ezekiel, with a medallion of Christ surrounded by the symbols of the evangelists.[49] The Old Testament scene on the reverse is rare in Byzantine art, though the iconography has been known since the fifth century, and the icon as a whole is considered to be 'a masterpiece of the Palaiologan age'.[50]

Though the icon included an inscription on the obverse, the identity of the patron has become a subject of debate; the patron was only referred to as the *basilissa* and, as has been discussed, this could account for numerous

[49] Weyl Carr, 'Images: Expressions', p.198.
[50] Weyl Carr, 'Images: Expressions', pp.198-9.

women during this period. Elsewhere in the church are three medallions with the names Constantine, Helena, and Saint John the Theologian inscribed upon them, which has led to the suggestion that a Helena could be the mysterious female patron of the icon.[51] The suggestions for this elusive Helena have been the *basilissa* Helena Dragaš, or the wife of John Uglesha: Constantine and Helena, however, were common names among the local noble families in the latter half of the fourteenth century and hence the patrons may have been members of the local nobility.[52] However, further arguments for Helena Dragaš apply. As seen earlier in this case study, the Palaiologans of this period attempted to link themselves to their earlier progenitor, Constantine the Great. The image of both Constantine and Helena was struck on to coinage during Manuel's reign, and Constantine may well also be represented on Manuel's *sakkos* on their familial portrait on MS Ivoires A53. If Helena were to patronise a church, it would thus make sense to include the legitimising figures of Constantine and Helena within the decorative schema, as Manuel was attempting to do.

Conclusion

Overall, the last Byzantine empress of this thesis both kept and broke with the traditions that have been explored throughout the entirety of this work. Her image was included in a gift – a first for that of the empress – to a French monastery, which had several unusual elements about it, but which largely conformed to convention. It underlined her, and her family's, imperial

[51] Weyl Carr, 'Images: Expressions', p.199.
[52] Weyl Carr, 'Images: Expressions', p.199.

background and emphasised their familial relationship to each other, thus showing the juxtaposition of their differences in status, but then also the reciprocal, legitimising connections by way of being related to each other. Although Helena did not appear on any coins that are still extant, it can be seen that her image was still used competitively: the pyxis acted to outline the political relationship between the two branches of the family, and it was her office that was being represented there to do so. In terms of Helena's representation, she was more frequently depicted with her children, specifically her sons and heirs, clearly linking back to representations throughout the entirety of the Byzantine Empire: sixth- and seventh-century coinage, miniatures of the ninth century, coinage of the eleventh century and mosaics of the thirteenth century, to name but a few. Her costume was largely in keeping with conventional Byzantine costumes for empresses, but in some key aspects, it was more elaborate; the crown especially was taller, more so than the emperor's, and covered in jewels, in a transmuting of variations of the crowns of previous Palaiologan empresses. Overall, the depictions that are still extant of Helena portrayed the empress as one concerned with outlining the responsibilities and facets of the office: familial relations, legitimacy, prosperity, piety, and, overall, her status within the office of the empress – the highest position a Byzantine woman could ever attain.

Summary of the Representations of Late Byzantine Empresses

The Late Byzantine period can clearly be seen as a time of development within a much different context than what the Early and Middle Byzantine periods went through; the empire had suffered dramatic losses, especially in terms of territory and, after initial successes, continued to do so. This, of course, had an effect on how the imperial offices were portrayed. As was seen particularly with the case of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, the office of the empress tended to be represented in a way that was vastly similar to that of the twelfth century; the same costume, the same contexts, similar reported actions, and similar associations, with both imperial and divine personages. However, even within Theodora's tenure, changes can be seen which foreshadow the developments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; within this case study, we see an empress promulgate her opinion on religious controversy resulting in the production of a chrysobull, the first time we have evidence for an empress who has undertaken this distinctly imperial task alone.

Additionally, the third section of this thesis showed a much broader use of representations of the empress: those polities outside of Byzantium had begun to make use of distinctly Byzantine conventions and portraiture, and this was certainly reflected in the portrayal of their female rulers, as was seen in the case study of Maria Angelina, and other competing influences, both internal and external. The use of titles and imperial family names also comes through much more strongly than it did in earlier periods and was certainly a way of connecting the figure with both the contemporary and previous imperial families based in Constantinople. Although traditional conventions were largely

used to underscore the office, again such as costume, innovation was also certainly seen in this period: Maria Angelina's dynamic appearance in a canonical scene in an icon – and possible elision with the Virgin Mary in her portrayal as Maria Regina – can be seen as a further emphasis of both her piety and her divine approval to rule, which is far enough outside the usual depiction of a Byzantine empress to have garnered the label 'unique' in discussions, but was a trope that became popularised and frequent in depictions in western Europe, and the specific iconography of the canonical scene was repeated several times in the local region. As the development of the representations of Late Byzantine empresses have never been tracked before, so too has this dichotomy of traditional tropes and innovations within the office never before been explored either.

With these outside and internal pressures competing for recognition and legitimacy as imperial figures, through the use of a shared cultural landscape and cultural memory, it could also be argued that depictions of the Palaiologan empresses based in Constantinople began to consolidate their positions. Although the costumes adhered to convention and representations linking back to the twelfth century and earlier, they also became more elaborate and titled. That Helena's image was sent as part of a diplomatic gift, with its legitimising imperial features, is certainly telling; within the context of the imperial family, and overall reflected the appropriateness of her location within this scene.

Conclusions

This thesis sought to address and explore the messages conveyed by the representations of Byzantine empresses, and examine elements of staticity and continuity, change and innovation. Through an analysis of physical depictions, and literary records of portraiture and activities, this thesis showed that, though entrenched in tradition, the representation of the empress was not fixed. Instead, it changed and adapted over the long chronological span of the Byzantine Empire, but as a consistently visible fixture of imperial hierarchy. By making use of case studies, this thesis was able to track these changes over time, looking at specific images comparatively across the breadth of the empire. It also focused on four major themes, to which the studies consistently linked: portraiture, positioning, piety and patronage.

The first third of the thesis noted and explored several distinct changes within the representations of empresses, from the fourth century onwards, which focused heavily on these thematic nodal points. Taking the representations and activities of Helena, as well as her connection with the newly-legalised religion of Christianity, as a jumping-off point, this thesis tracked changes in the portraiture from the idealised elite woman to a visible, imperial presence displayed within the political hierarchy, coinciding with the creation of space made by association with obvious, pious actions. We can also see how Helena's image and activities served to bolster the reputation of the imperial family, especially after the deaths of Crispus and Fausta, and then posthumously to compete in the high stakes of the political game that developed after the death of Constantine. Such was her reputation for piety and imperial virtue that we see patriographical texts record her image in key spaces

of political significance dotted around the capital city, and she became a model for later empresses to follow. Helena was also the starting point for the evolution in costume for the empress: jewellery was more commonly seen on numismatic portrayals and we see the development of the diadem.

This smaller costume change is picked up on and expanded in the second and third case study of Ariadne and Theodora respectively. The transformation of the indistinguishable elite Roman woman, to the distinct, elaborately costumed portraiture of the empress is traced through the fifth and sixth centuries, with the culmination of this metamorphosis crystallised in the famous mosaic at San Vitale. The nimbate, crowned figure, festooned with purple and gold cloth, and precious gems is undeniably the Byzantine empress. This change signified the creation of a distinct role or office of the empress, one that could not be confused with the roles of other elite women. This development is compounded by the introduction of Christian iconography, a permanent fixture in portrayals of the empress from the late fourth century onwards. There is also a stylistic shift of the empress' image, moving closer to the traditional base of the emperor's power, through the use of masculine attributes and contexts – imperial victory and triumph, the *chlamys* and consular dress of the *loros* – and mixed with older ideals of motherhood and security, preceded by associations with Venus. This is further showcased by the concurrent development of the presentation of the emperor and the empress as the imperial unit, which focused on messages of imperial, Christian victory.

This broadens out towards the Middle Byzantine period onwards and the distinct role of the empress is used to legitimise and reaffirm dynastic portrayals, seen with Eudokia Ingerina and Piroška-Eirene as well as, in some

cases, their roles within regencies, like Eirene and the legitimisation of emperors, with the images of Zoe. Through specific imagery, labels, associations, and contexts, the audience could see, largely not the individual idiosyncrasies and preferences of those persons depicted, but what the imperial machine – irrespective of individual autonomy and agency – wanted to be seen. That is, the idealised representation of the empress, and connotations with the legitimacy and approval of the ruling family and, overall, the emperor. Even when the extant images are not named, the representation of the empress is telling; especially that there is space for figure of the empress within political and religious contexts, regardless of their 'domineering' personalities.

This can be nuanced when looking at the reign of Eirene: her innovative depictions, potentially displaying her own agency, created a clear image of herself as the sole ruler, and the empress as a strong position. Her success in constructing this ideal is reflected in the use of iconographically similar images throughout the Middle Byzantine period, especially of regents. This was also seen with the case of Zoe and Theodora's dual rule; they carefully and quickly spread their image to maintain their rule, despite the unusual nature of their portrayal.[1] Slow evolutions to the costume can be tracked leading into the Late period, with the Palaiologan empresses often looking back to the Middle period to root their images in traditional symbols of power.

[1] There are other representations of imperial sisters together, but these are in the context of the children of imperial families. One rare example is the *nomismata* of Theophilos, *DOC III.I*, cat.3.1, p.407, which depicted three of his daughters; Thekla, Anna, and Anastasia: C. Hennessy, 'The Byzantine Child: Picturing Complex Family Dynamics', in L. Brubaker & S. Tougher (eds.), *Approaches to the Byzantine Family* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 207-31, pp.211-3. The Madrid Skylitzes' manuscript, MS.gr.Vitr.26-2, fol.44v, also proffers a somewhat relevant example, which depicted all of Theodora and Theophilos' daughters – Thekla, Anastasia, Pulcheria, Anna, and Maria – learning about the veneration of icons from their grandmother Theoktiste, despite Theophilos' support for iconoclasm: Tsamakda, *Skylitzes*, pp.86-7.

That this was a successful brand of imperial messaging is showcased not only by repeated use through twelve centuries of Byzantium but also its transference to and effective use in other polities. This was demonstrated clearly by the case study of Theophano, wherein we saw the successful merging of the Byzantine empress with western medieval queenship into a clear ruling identity, able to act within a regency capacity until her death; and Maria Angelina who, under her own aegis, produced dynamic and innovative portraiture of herself, which appropriated Byzantine imperial signifiers and nomenclature to link her rule to that of the traditional ruling dynasties of Byzantium. These constructed identities – the easily-recognisable and legitimate brand – of the empress relied largely on a shared cultural memory and shared landscape of images, materials, and titles, from within and on the peripheries of the Byzantine Empire. These portraits were able to tap into this, and from that, perhaps, act competitively.

But, of course, this must be placed in the context of a patriarchal system. For many of these empresses, their presence and their own power was interconnected with that of an imperial male – either a father, husband, or son – and, as shown by Eirene, a woman acting alone did not rule untroubled.[2] Of course, this can be interpreted in different ways, with some empresses being consistently represented because they were the source of power and connection to the imperial dignity for their husbands, or because they were displayed as the regent of an infant emperor. One way in which we can see the empress'

[2] There are some examples where empresses largely ruled in their own right, but, with the exception of Theodora (1050) who ruled for a year before she died of natural causes, they were either quickly replaced or were closely connected with an imperial male through regency or marriage – even Pulcheria, the self-proclaimed virgin and connections with the Virgin Mary which became the platform on which she built her power, married Marcian (450-457) after her brother's death in 450.

hand in the construction of her own public identity is that of patronage, one of the other major themes that run throughout this thesis. While agency can be difficult to see, shrouded by layers of depersonalisation, patronage can show us, especially when it is evidenced by *typika,* what the empress was interested in patronising, and her expectations, and should be interpreted as a political action in itself, through its overt visibility and connotation of status. As a key public facet of the empress, her patronage, both of ecclesiastic and occasionally civic institutions, took place throughout the entirety of the period, and was clearly of central importance to the public conception of the empress.

Through this examination of patronage, I have also discussed the idea of competition and competitive agency. Through portraiture, positioning, visible piety and patronage, the empress' representation, with all of its recognisable, imperial elements as 'branding', constructs a narrative of imperial power that could be used in competition with rival power bases, internal or external. A further example of this competition may be the use of the representation of the empress within gift-giving and use in diplomatic contexts. Whether the item was sent as a gift to a potential ally, or used to subversively show support for a potential usurper, the representations of the empress were considered appropriate to be there.

Overall, while the representation of the empress was rooted in continuity and tradition – and thus authority – the evolution of this role over a millennium of the Byzantine Empire has also been shown to be innovative and changeable. Through the consistent use of imperial and religious iconography, it was used to display power within the imperial hierarchy, signalling the continuation and legitimacy of the imperial family; and also forming an imperial brand that was

recognisable and overt, used competitively for the office of the empress and through her own agency.

Figures

1. The Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses

1.1. Octavia

Follis depicting the busts of Octavia, on right, and Marc Antony, on left, on the obverse; the reverse depicts galleys.

(BIFA, R0805)

1.2. Tetrarchy

Four co-joined porphyry statues of the Tetrarchy.

(Venice, Piazza San Marco; photograph is my own)

1.3. Tetrarchy

Two co-joined porphyry statues of the Tetrarchy on column.

(BAV; digitised by LSA, LSA-840)

1.4. Tetrarchy

Two co-joined statues as part of a relief, with painted remnants.

(Izmit; Ağtürk, 'New Tetrarchic Relief', pp.411-4)

1.5. Helena

Follis of Helena, with bust on obverse, as *nobilissima femina.*

(*RIC VII*, cat.50; digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.6. Fausta

Follis of Fausta, with bust on obverse, as *nobilissima femina*, and eight-pointed star on reverse.

(*RIC VII*, cat.51; digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.7. Galeria Valeria

Solidus of Galeria Valeria, with bust on obverse and the figure of Venus Victory on the reverse.

(BIFA, R2667)

1.8. Galeria Valeria

Follis of Galeria Valeria, with bust, wearing laurel wreath, on obverse.

(*RIC VI*, cat.34 (Thessaloniki); digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.9. Helena

Follis of Helena, with bust on the obverse.

(*RIC VII*, cat.218 (Siskia); digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.10. Fausta

Follis of Fausta, with bust on the obverse.

(*RIC VII*, cat.205 (Siskia); digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.11. Helena

Solidus of Helena, with bust on the obverse, and the personification of Securitas on the reverse.

(*RIC VII*, cat.79 (Nikomedia); digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

1.12. Fausta

Solidus of Fausta, with bust on the obverse, and the personification of Salus on the reverse.

(*RIC VII*, cat.77 (Nikomedia); digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

)

1.13. Helena (Deceased)

Follis of Helena, with bust on the obverse, and the personification of Pax on the reverse.

(BIFA, R3144)

1.14. Theodora (deceased)

Follis of Theodora, with bust on the obverse, and the personification of Pietas on the reverse.

(BIFA, R3150)

1.15. Pulcheria

Solidus of Pulcheria, with bust on the obverse, and Victory with tall cross on reverse.

(BIFA, LR0584b)

1.16. Helena and Fausta

Large cameo depicting the 'Triumph of the Emperor Constantine', wherein two of the female figures may represent Fausta and Helena.

(Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, inv.GS-11096; digitised by Universiteit Leiden)

1.17. Noble Woman

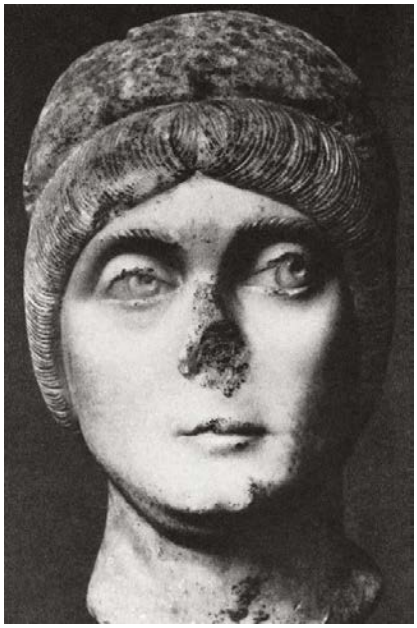
Detail of a woman, holding jewellery box, from frescoed ceiling in Trier.

(Trier, Bischöfliches Dom- und Diözesanmuseum)

1.18. Noble Woman

Detail of a woman, holding *kantharos*, from frescoed ceiling in Trier.

(Trier, Bischöfliches Dom- und Diözesanmuseum)



1.19. Helena

Bust of a Roman woman, sometimes identified as Helena.

(Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv.835)

1.20. Helena

Bust of a Roman woman, sometimes identified as Helena.

(Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv.62.662)

1.21. Helena

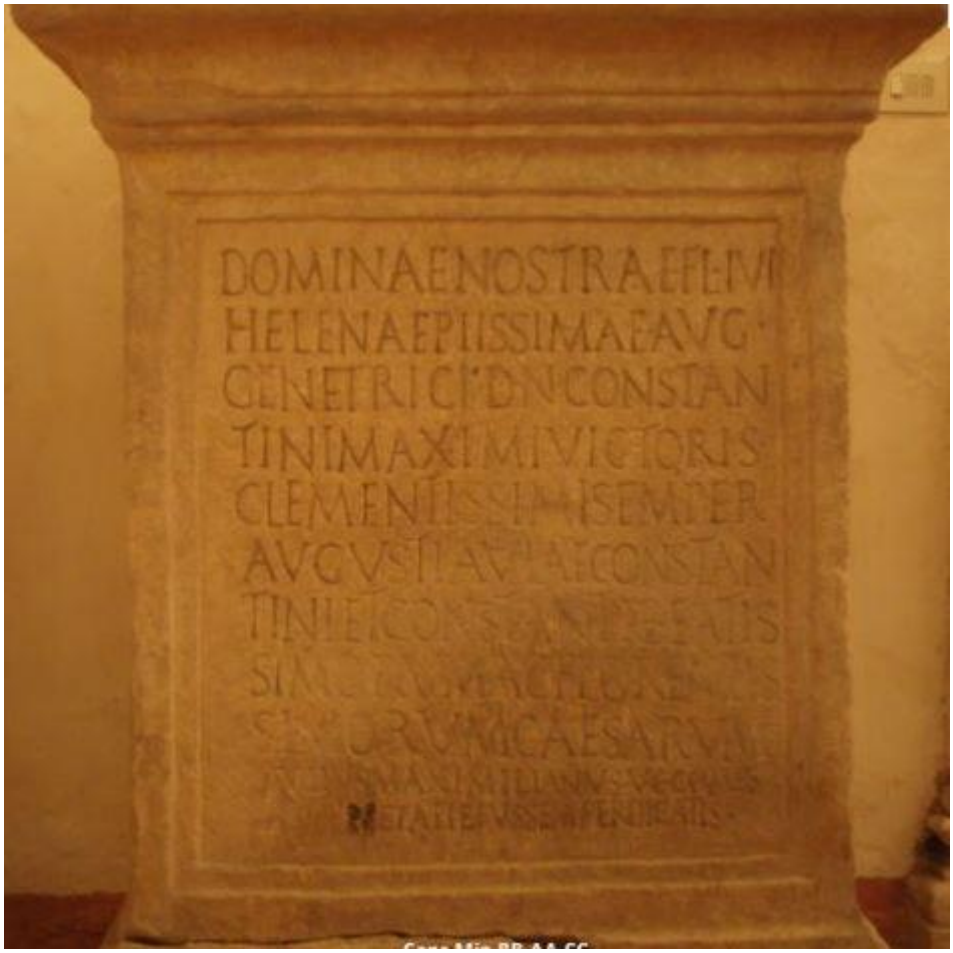
Seated statue of a Roman woman with the head only identified as Helena.

(Rome, Museo Capitolino, inv.496)

1.22. Helena

Seated statue of a Roman woman, sometimes identified as Helena.

(Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi, inv.171; photograph is my own)



1.23. Helena

Statue base with inscription identifying lost statue as Helena, and with evidence for bronze statuary.

(LSA 835; digitised by the LSA project)

1.24. Ariadne

Solidus of Ariadne, as bust on obverse, and Victory holding a wreath and *globus cruciger* on the reverse.

(*RIC X*, cat.936 (Zeno); digitised by the American Numismatics Society)

1.25. Ariadne

Solidus of Ariadne, with the bust of Ariadne on the obverse, and a cross in wreath on the reverse.

(*RIC X*, cat.935 (Zeno); digitised by the American Numismatics Society)

1.26. Ariadne

Reverse of the marriage solidus of Ariadne and Anastasios commemorating their union in 491, with Christ at the centre.

(*DOC I*, cat.1; photograph is my own)

1.27. Licinia Eudoxia

Marriage *solidus* of Licinia Eudoxia and Valentinian III commemorating their union in 437 on the reverse, with Theodosios II taking the central role.

(*RIC X*, cat.267 (Theodosios II); digitised by the American Numismatics Society)

1.28. Pulcheria

Marriage *solidus* of Pulcheria and Marcian commemorating their union in 450 on the reverse, with Christ taking the central role.

(*RIC X*, cat.502 (Marcian); Connor, *Women of Byzantium*, pp.62.)

1.29a. Ariadne

Ivory consular diptych, depicting the consul Clementius (513) with two medallions in the upper register representing Anastasios and Ariadne.

(Liverpool, World Museum, inv.M10036; photograph is my own)

1.29b. Ariadne

Detail of ivory consular diptych, depicting the consul Clementius (513) with two medallions in the upper register representing Anastasios and Ariadne.

(Liverpool, World Museum, inv.M10036; photograph is my own)

1.30. Ariadne

Ivory panel depicting a lone, enthroned empress.

(Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Antikensammlung, inv.X39)

1.31. Ariadne

Ivory panel depicting a lone, standing empress.

(Florence, Bargello Museo, inv. Carrand 24)

1.32. Ariadne

Statue head, usually identified with Ariadne.

(Paris, Musée du Louvre, Départment des Sculptures, inv. R.F.1525; digitised by the Louvre)

1.33. Amalasuntha

Ivory consular diptych of Rufius Gennadius Probus Orestes (530), with two medallions in the upper register likely representing Amalasuntha and Athalaric.

(London, Victoria and Albert Museum, no.139-1866; digitised by the V&A)

1.34. Ariadne

Steel-yard weight representing an empress, often stylistically dated to the fifth century. Previously identified as a range of empresses, including Ariadne.

(New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980.416a,b; digitised by the Met Collection)

1.35. Anicia Juliana

Bust of a statue of an elite woman holding a scroll in her right hand, often stylistically dated to the fifth century. Previously identified as Anicia Juliana.

(New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 66.25; digitised by the Met Collection)

1.36. Virgin Mary

Mosaics of the Virgin Mary in her role as Maria Regina.

(Rome, Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, mosaic arch)

1.37. Sophia

Follis of Justin II and Sophia, represented enthroned on the obverse.

(BIFA, B1208)

1.38 Constantia

Follis of Maurice and Constantia, represented standing on the obverse, with Theodosios on the reverse.

(BIFA, B2419)

1.39 Leontia

Follis of Phokas and Leontia, represented standing on the obverse.

(BIFA, B2497)

1.40. Christ

Apse mosaic depicting Christ the Redeemer, archangels, the martyr, Vitalis, and the bishop patron, Ecclesius.

(Ravenna, Basilica di San Vitale, apse; photograph is my own)

1.41. Justinian

Imperial mosaic, depicting Justinian, soldiers, members of the clergy and elite men of the court. Likely taking part in a liturgical procession.

(Ravenna, Basilica di San Vitale, apse; photograph is my own)

1.42. Theodora

Imperial mosaic depicting Theodora, elite women of the court and men, probably eunuchs, with courtyard scenery.

(Ravenna, Basilica di San Vitale, apse; photograph is my own)

1.43. Theodora

View from assumed congregational space for women (on the left aisle of the church), leading to view of Theodora panel.

(Ravenna, Basilica di San Vitale; photograph is my own)

1.44. Theodora

Ivory consular diptych of Justin (540), which depicted Christ, Justinian and Theodora in medallions in the upper register.

(Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv.6367)

1.45. Herakleios

Solidus of Herakleios with his sons and heirs, Herakleios-Constantine (the son from his first marriage, later known as Constantine III, 641) and Constantine-Herakleios (a son from his second marriage, later known as Heraklonas, 641).

(BIFA, B2960)

1.46. Martina

Siliqua of Martina and Herakleios. The female image has also been identified as Epiphania, Herakleios' daughter from his first marriage.

1.47. Martina

Follis of Martina, Herakleios, and Herakleios-Constantine. The female figure on this coin has also been identified as Epiphania, Herakleios' daughter from his first marriage. The reverse of this coin is overstruck, so the date cannot be determined: Grierson gives it as 615-624.

(*DOC II.I,* cat.96; photograph is my own)

1.48. Martina

Possible layout of the David plates, with the largest plate, the Battle of David and Goliath, taking up the central spot.

(Wander, 'The Cyprus Plates', pp.95; photo by Leo Holub, Stanford University)

1.49. Martina

Silver plate of the marriage of David and Mihal, suggested to be Herakleios and Martina.

(Nicosia, Archaeological Museum, J452; digitisation by the Fine Arts Library, Harvard University)

1.50 Martina

Detail of Michal on the silver plate of the marriage of David and Mihal, suggested to be Martina.

(Nicosia, Archaeological Museum, J452; digitisation by the Fine Arts Library, Harvard University)

1.51. Helena:

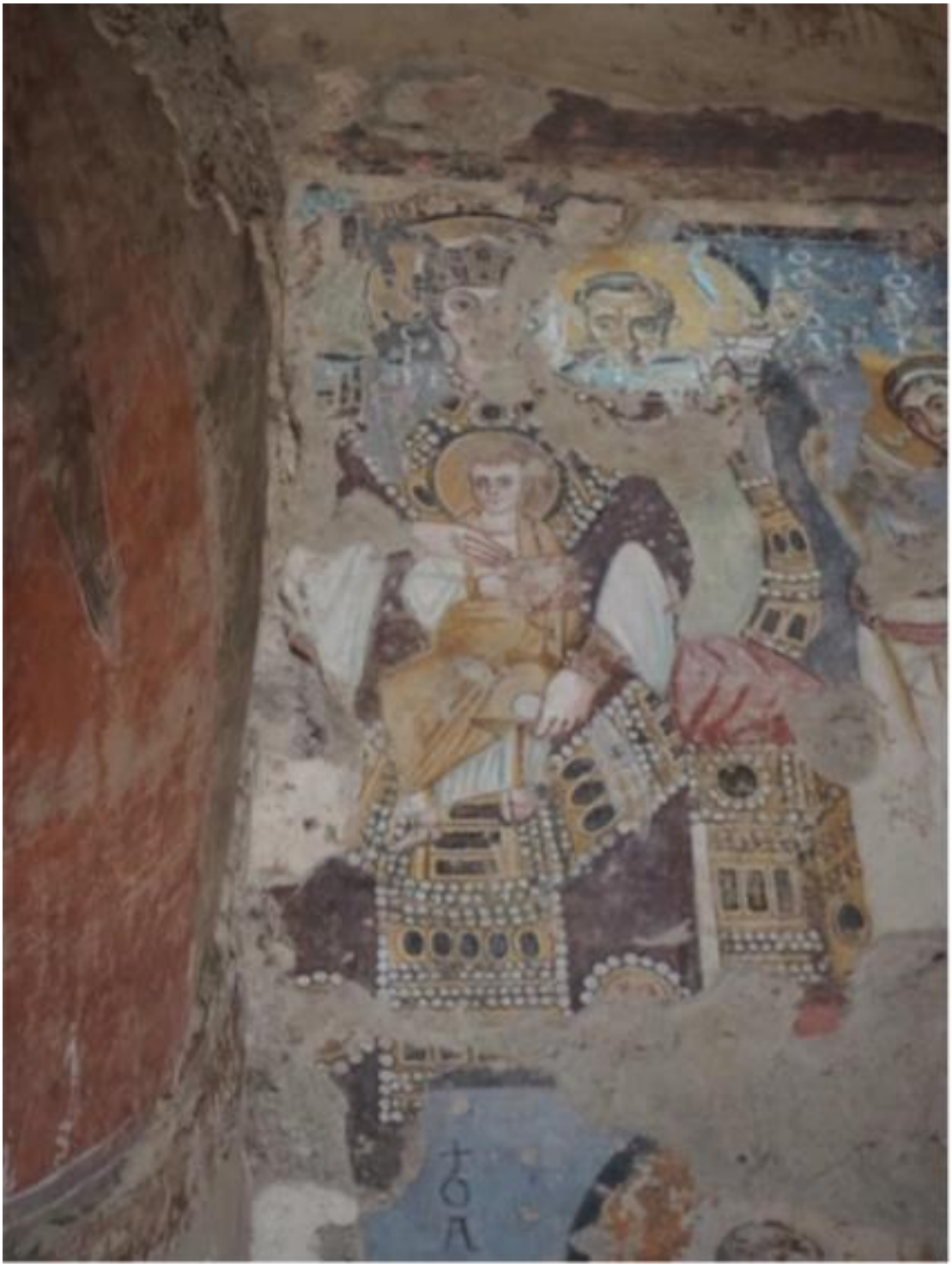
Medallion issued by Crispus, 324, Trier. Crispus as *caesar* on obverse; Crispus and Constantine II on reverse, with female figure between them.

(London, British Museum, inv.1896, 0608.102; digitisation by British Museum)

1.52. Helena:

Medallion depicting Constantinian family; the emperor and empress facing each other, with three smaller figures below and Chi-Rho in field above.

(Nantes, Musée Dobrée, inv.923.3.1; digitisation by Musée Dobrée)



1.53. Maria Regina:

Fresco displaying the enthroned Maria Regina with Christ Child, amongst other layers of decoration.

(Rome, Santa Maria Antigua; photograph courtesy of Flora Watson)

1.54. Theodora:

Column with monogram of Theodora carved into the capital, found in Hebdomon.

(Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv.1239 T; photograph is my own)

1.55. Fifth or Sixth-Century Empress:

Column with figure of a fifth or sixth-century empress carved into the capital, found in Hebdomon.

(Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv.6229 T; photograph is my own)

1.56 Theodora:

Column with monogram of Theodora carved into the capital, from Hagia Sophia.

(Istanbul, Hagia Sophia)

2. The Representations of Middle Byzantine Empresses

2.1. Leo IV

Nomisma of Leo IV and Constantine VI, depicted as busts, wearing *chlamys*, on the obverse. Busts of Leo III and Constantine V, wearing *loros*, on reverse.

(BIFA, B4583)

2.2. Eirene of Athens (Regency)

Nomisma of Eirene and Constantine VI, depicted as busts, wearing *chlamys* and *loros* respectively, on the obverse. Busts of Leo III, Constantine V, and Leo IV, wearing *loros*, on reverse.

(BIFA, B4599)

2.3a. Eirene of Athens (Regency)

Follis of Eirene and Constantine VI. Eirene is depicted on the obverse in *loros*, and Constantine is depicted on the reverse, in *chlamys*, above the officina mark.

(*DOC III.I*, cat.7.1; digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

2.3b. Eirene of Athens (Regency)

Nomisma of Eirene and Constantine VI. Eirene is depicted on the obverse, in *loros*, and Constantine is depicted on the reverse, in *chlamys*.

(BIFA, B4597)

2.4. Eirene of Athens

Nomisma of Eirene, depicted as bust, wearing *loros*, on both obverse and reverse.

(BIFA, B4609)

2.5. Theodora (Regency)

Nomisma of Theodora and Michael III. Theodora is depicted on the obverse, wearing the *loros*, whereas Michael III and Thekla, wearing the *chlamys* and *loros* respectively, are on the reverse.

(BIFA, B4744)

2.6. Zoe Karbonopsina

Follis of Zoe Karbonopsina and Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos. Both are depicted on the obverse, wearing a *loros* and *chlamys* respectively, holding the patriarchal cross between them, with the reverse bearing an inscription.

(BIFA, B4868)

2.7. Theophilos

Single-issue *nomisma* of Theophilos. Theophilos, Theodora and Thekla are depicted on the obverse, with Anna and Anastasia on the reverse.

(*DOC III.I*, cat.407; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks, via M. Vrij)

2.8. Sixth-Century Empress

Lead seal of an unknown Xenon, which depicts a half-length imperial couple with the Virgin Mary, holding a medallion of Christ, in between them and an inscription below.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.5394; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.9. Constantine VI

Lead seal of Constantine VI, which depicts his bust on the obverse; he is the only figure on this seal.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.561; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.10. Eirene of Athens (Regency)

Obverse of lead seal of Anthimos (*hypatos*, *asekretis*, general *kommerkiarios*, and *archon* of the *blattion*) which depicts the busts of Eirene and Constantine on the obverse. The inscription for this seal is on the reverse, beneath the images of the male relatives of Constantine VI.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.1744; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.11a. Eirene of Athens

Obverse of lead seal of the *kommerkiarios*, which depicts Eirene's bust on the obverse. Bottom of seal is badly damaged; thus Eirene's costume (and the latter section of the reverse inscription) is indistinct.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.2778; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.11b. Eirene of Athens

Obverse of lead seal of Eirene, which depicts her bust, wearing *loros*. This is one of five similar examples from the Dumbarton Oaks collection.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.595; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.12. Eirene of Athens

Manuscript illumination from the *Menologion* of Basil II, showing a tenth-century depiction of the Second Council of Nikaia, led only by Constantine VI.

(BAV, *Menologion* of Basil II, Vat.gr.1613, fol.108; digitised by the DigiVatLib)

2.13. Eirene of Athens

Ivory panel depicting the translation of a relic, recently argued to depict the figures of Eirene and Constantine VI, dedicating the Church of St Euphemia.

(Trier Cathedral, Treasury; photograph taken by Ann Münchow)

2.14. Eudokia Ingerina

Nomisma of Eudokia, Basil I, and Constantine. Basil is depicted on the obverse whilst Eudokia and Constantine are on the reverse.

(*DOC III.II*, cat.4; photograph is my own)

2.15. Eudokia Ingerina

Manuscript illumination from the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, showing a portrait of Eudokia, Leo, and Alexander.

(Paris, BnF, Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus gr.510, fol.BR; digitised by BnF, Gallica)

2.16. Basil I

Manuscript illumination from the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, showing a portrait of Basil with Elijah and Gabriel.

(Paris, BnF, Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, gr.510, fol.CV; digitised by BnF, Gallica)

2.17. Eudokia Ingerina

Ivory panel lid of which the middle section depicts Christ blessing Basil and Eudokia.

(Rome, Palazzo Venezia; Bildarchiv Foto Marburg, photograph taken by Albert Hirmer/Irmgard Ernstmeier-Hirmer)

2.18. Theodora

Manuscript illumination from the *Menologion* of Basil II, showing a tenth-century depiction of St Theodora.

(BAV, *Menologion* of Basil II, Vat.gr. 1613, fol.249; digitised by the DigiVatLib)

2.19. Theophano Martiniake

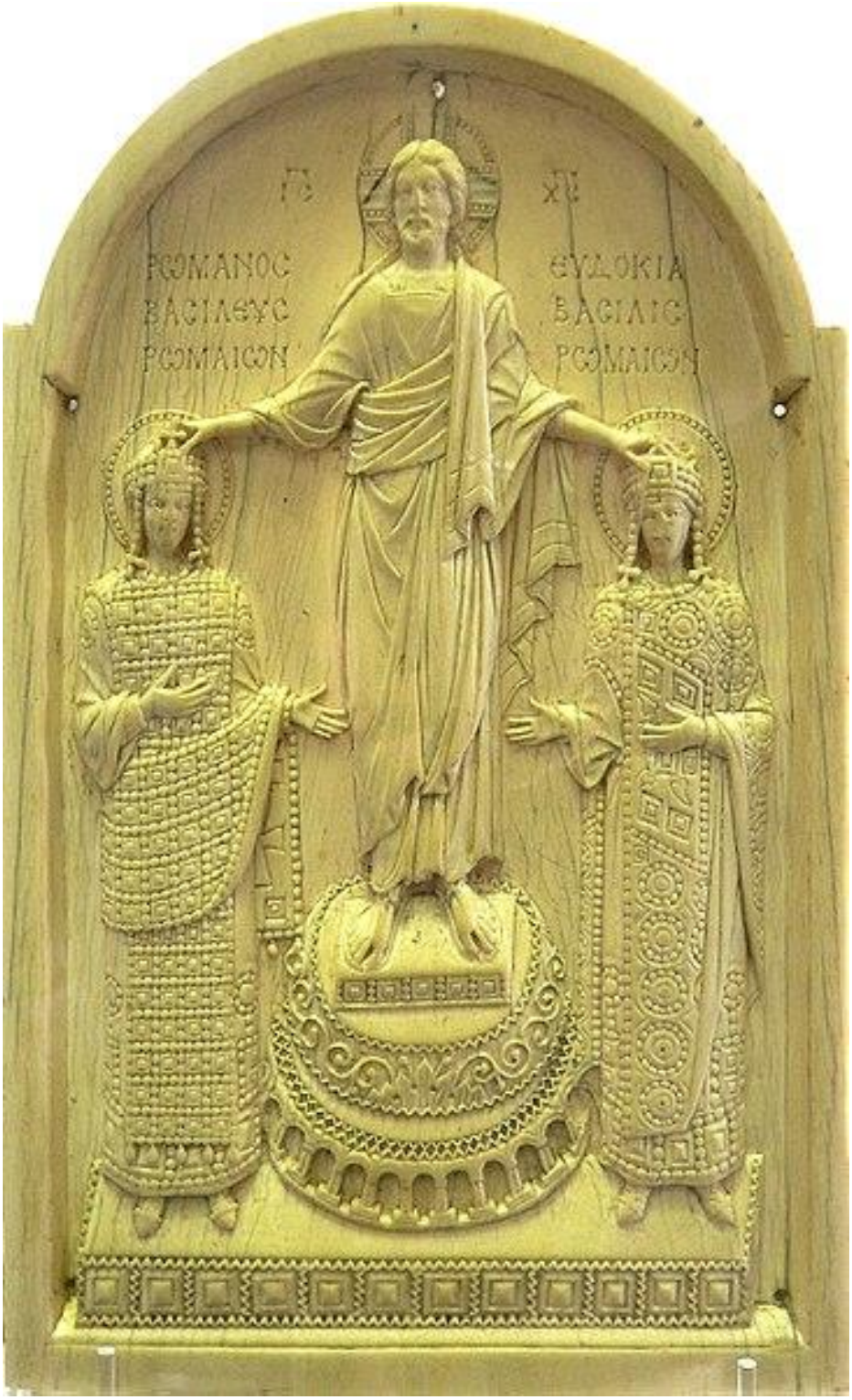
Manuscript illumination from the *Menologion* of Basil II, showing a tenth-century depiction of St Theophano Martiniake.

(BAV, *Menologion* of Basil II, Vat.gr. 1613, fol.392; digitised by the DigiVatLib)

2.20. Saint Eudokia

Inlaid marble icon of a Saint Eudokia, found within the complex of the Lips Monastery (Fenari Isa Mosque).

(Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv.4309; S. Gerstel, in Mathews, 'Religious Organizations', cat.8B.)



2.21. Bertha-Eudokia/Eudokia Makrembolitissa

Ivory plaque (known as the 'Romanos Ivory') depicting Christ blessing an imperial couple, identified in the inscription as Eudokia and Romanos.

(Paris, BnF, Département des Monnaiesm Médailles et Antiques, inv.55.300; digitised by BnF)

2.22. Otto I

Seal of Otto I, depicted as bust, wearing *chlamys*.

(Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.83)

2.23. Otto II

Seal of Otto II, depicted as bust, wearing *chlamys*.

(Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.88)

2.24. Theophano

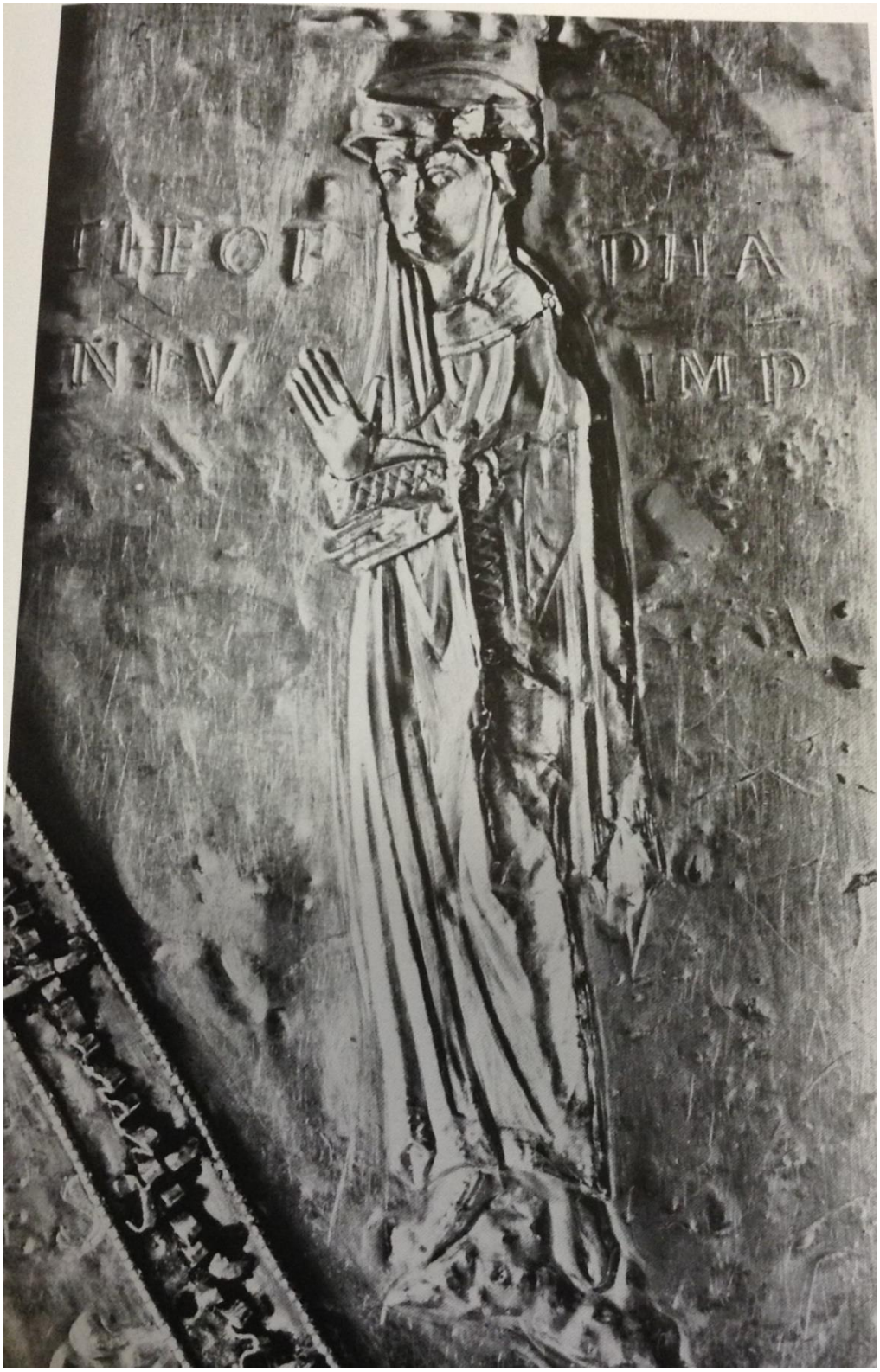
Ivory plaque depicting Christ blessing Otto and Theophano.

(Paris, Musée de Cluny, Musée national du Moyen Âge, inv.Cl.392; digitised by Musée de Cluny le Monde Médiéval)

2.25a. Theophano

Gilt book cover, with figures of Otto and Theophano, to left and right respectively, venerating Christ on the crucifix in the centre. Reused for a slightly later codex (Codex Aureus of Echternach, 1030-50).

(Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, inv. Hs.156142; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.104)



2.25b. Theophano

Detail of gilt book cover: Theophano.

(Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, inv. Hs.156142; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.104)

2.26a. Theophano

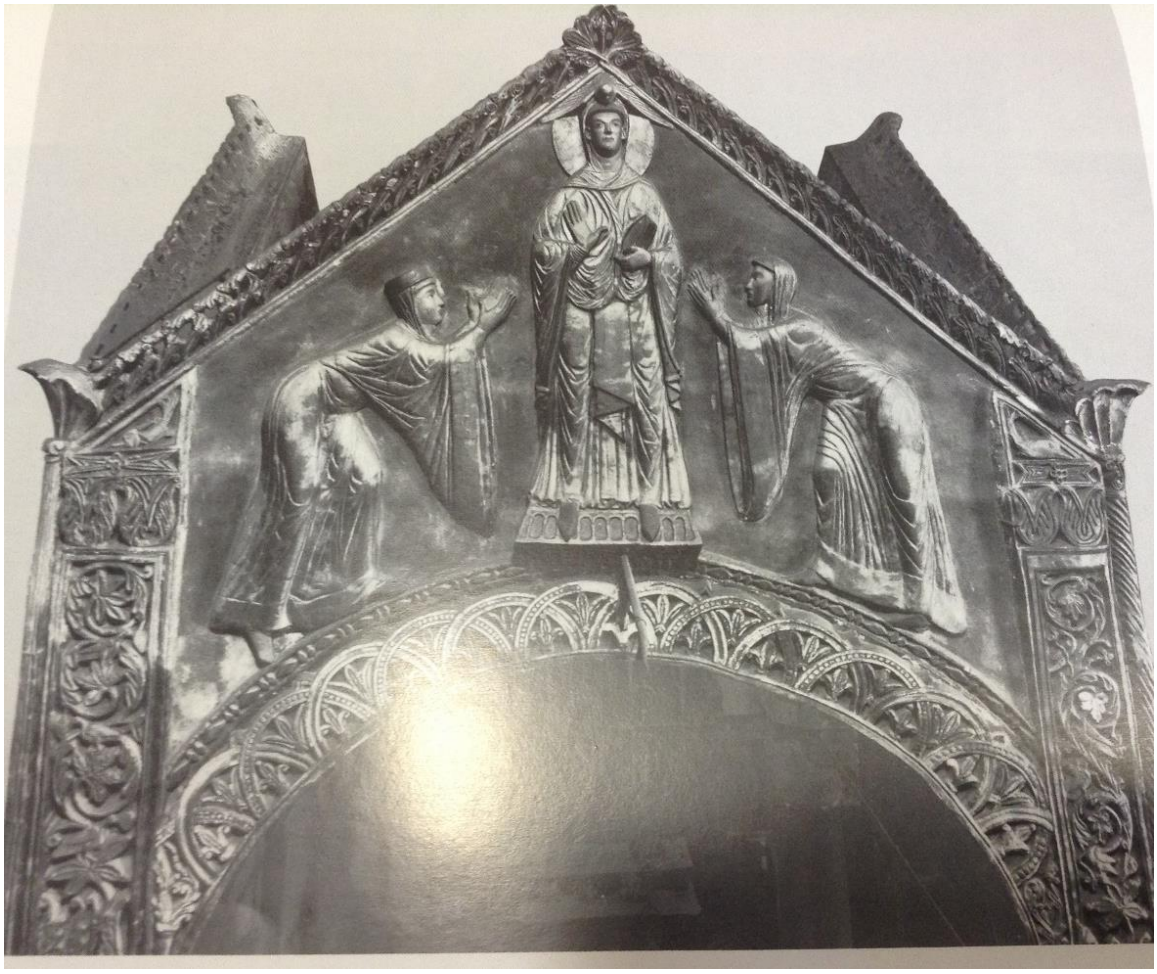
Lead medallion depicting Otto and Theophano, being blessed by Christ in centre, inscriptions above their heads.

(Helsinki, Tervetuloa Kansallismuseoon; Schramm*, Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.92a)

2.26b. Theophano

Lead medallion depicting Otto and Theophano, being blessed by Christ in centre, inscriptions to the left and right, respectively.

(Helsinki, Tervetuloa Kansallismuseoon; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.92a)



2.27a. Theophano

North side of ciborium, depicting two female figures venerating central figure.

(Milan, Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.86b)

2.27b. Otto

South side of ciborium, depicting two male figures venerating the central figure of St Ambrose.

(Milan, Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.86a)

2.28. Theophano

Fresco of Otto and Theophano, now partially destroyed.

(Rieti, Abbazia San Salvatore Maggiore; Schramm, *Kaiser und Konigein Bildern*, fig.94)

2.29a. Theodora

Histamenon of Theodora, with Christ depicted on the obverse, and Theodora holding a *labarum* with the Virgin Mary on the reverse.

(BIFA, B5359)

2.29b. Theodora

Tetarteron of Theodora, with the bust of Christ depicted on the obverse, and the bust of Theodora on the reverse.

(BIFA, B5360)

2.30a. Eudokia Makrembolitissa

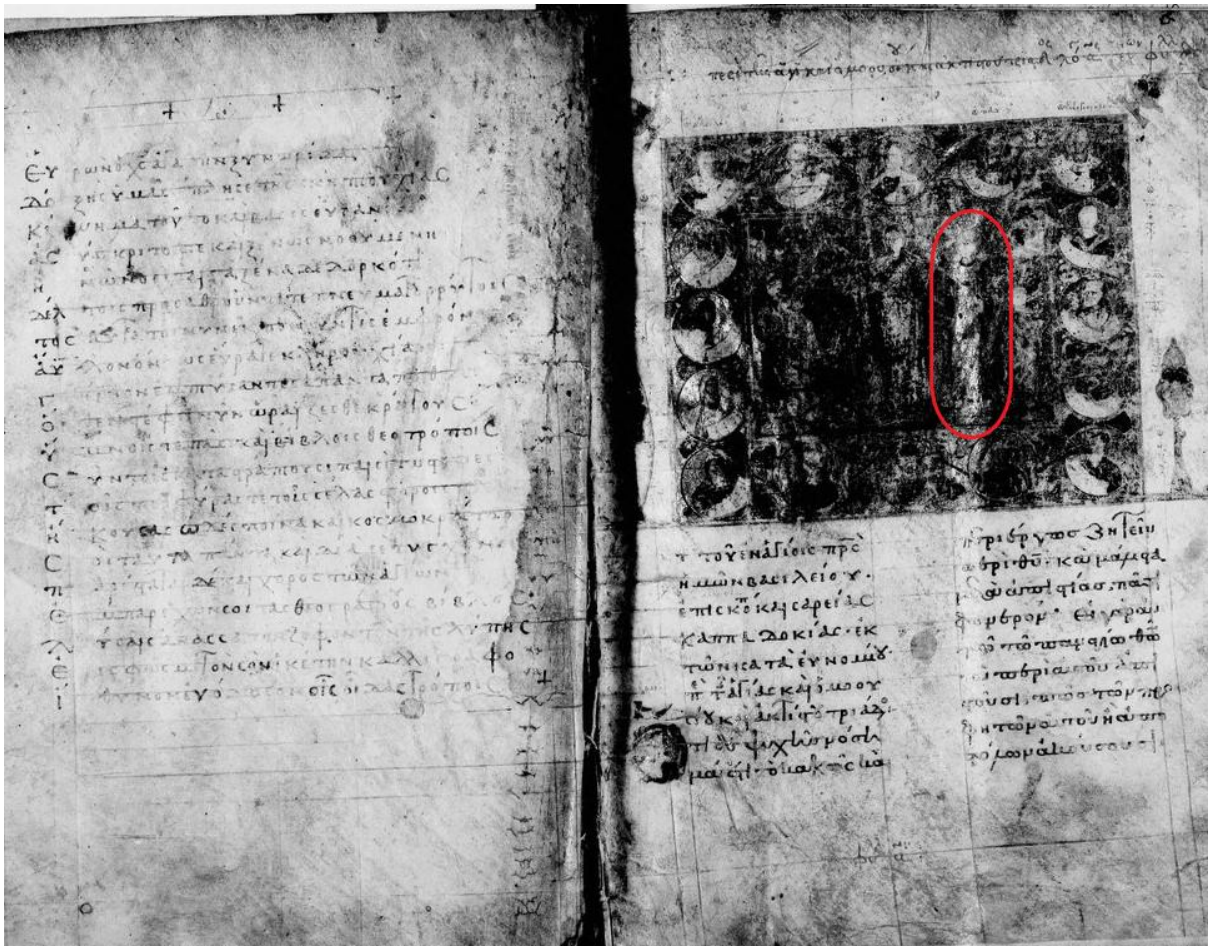
Histamenon of Eudokia, depicting an enthroned Christ on the obverse and Eudokia and her two sons, Michael VII Doukas and Constantine, on the reverse.

(BIFA, B5419)

2.30b. Eudokia Makrembolitissa

Histamenon of Eudokia and Romanos IV Diogenes, depicting the imperial couple being blessed by Christ on the reverse, and her three sons, Constantine, Michael VII Doukas, and Andronikos, on the obverse.

(BIFA, B5423)



2.31. Eudokia Makrembolitissa

Manuscript illumination of *Sacra Parallela* depicting Constantine X Doukas and Eudokia with her two sons, Michael VII Doukas and Constantine; highlighted to indicate relevant figure due to damage.

(Paris, BnF, *Sacra Parallela*, gr.922, fol.6r; digitised by BnF, Gallica)

2.32. Eudokia Makrembolitissa

Eight-sided reliquary of St Demetrios, on one side of which Eudokia and Constantine X Doukas are depicted, being blessed by a half-figure of Christ.

(Moscow, State Historical and Cultural Museum, MZ.1148; I. Kalaverzou, in Mathews, 'Religious Organizations', cat.36.)

2.33a. Maria of Alania

Tetarteron of Maria of Alania and Michael VII Doukas, with a bust of the Virgin Mary and medallion of Christ Child on the obverse, and the imperial couple holding the patriarchal cross between them on the reverse.

(BIFA, B5460)

2.33b. Maria of Alania

Obverse of *miliaresion* of Maria of Alania and Nikephoros III Botaniates, with busts of the imperial couple beneath the cross.

(*DOC VI*; digitised by the American Numismatics Society)

2.34. Maria of Alania

Manuscript illumination from the *Homilies of John Chrysostom*, showing a full-length portrait of Maria of Alania and Nikephoros III Botaniates (may originally have shown Michael VII Doukas).

(Paris, BnF, *Homilies of John Chrysostom*, Coislin 79, fol.2v; digitised by BnF, Gallica)

2.35a. Anna Dalassene

Obverse of the lead seal of Anna Dalassene, the inscription of which describes Anna as a nun, on the obverse, and the mother of the emperor on the reverse.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1947.2.1125; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.35b. Anna Dalassene

Reverse of the lead seal of Anna Dalassene, the inscription of which gives Anna the title of *protokouropalatissa*.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1947.2.1116; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.36. Eirene Doukaina

Reverse of the lead seal of Eirene Doukaina, whose bust is depicted.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1955.1.4349; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

2.37. Eirene Doukaina

Trachy of Alexios I Komnenos, who is depicted with on the obverse, while Eirene and John II Komnenos are on the reverse.

(BIFA, B5550)

2.38. Zoe Porphyrogennete and Theodora

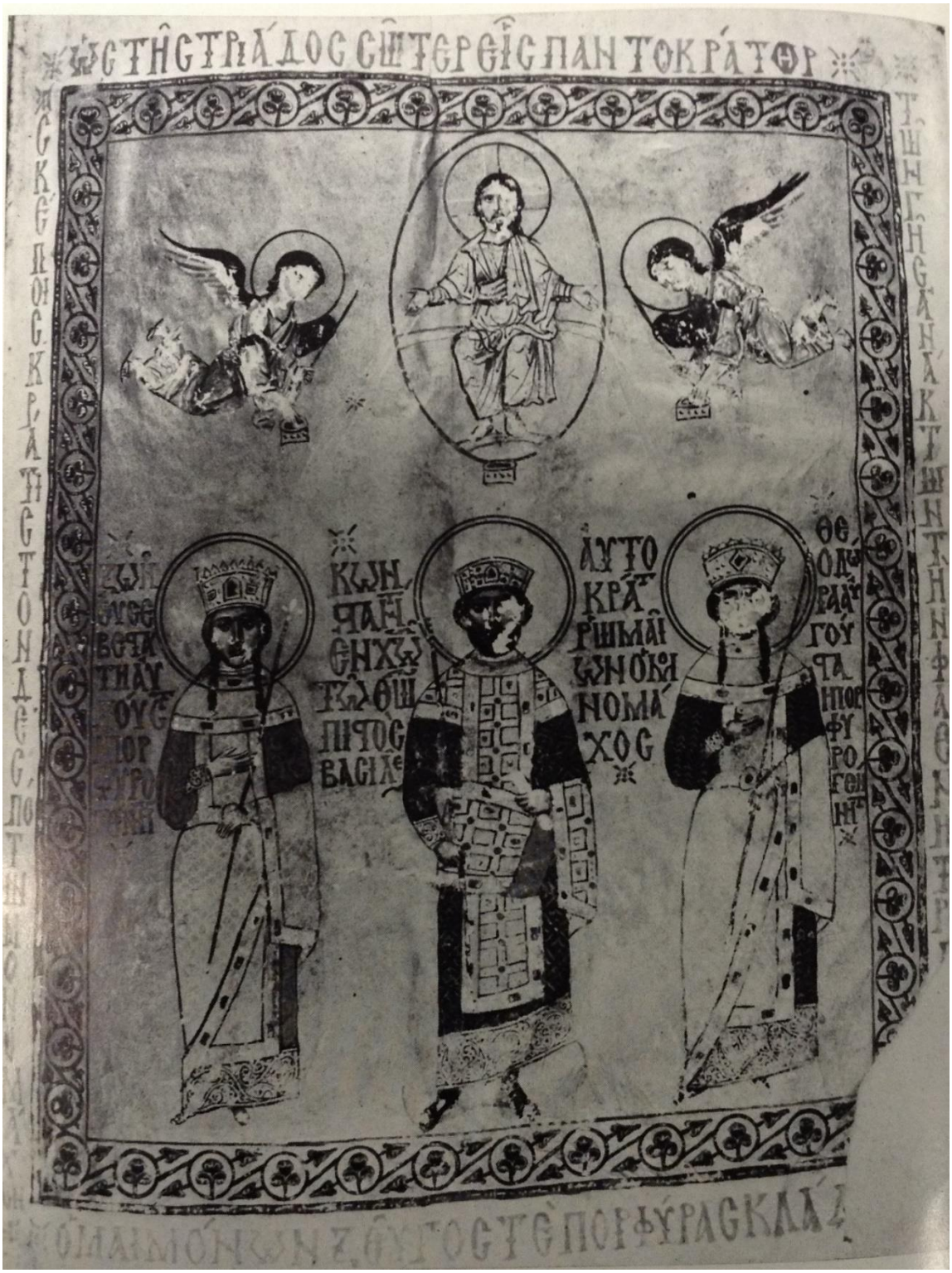
Reverse of *histamenon* of Zoe and Theodora, both depicted, wearing the *loros*, and holding the *labarum* between them.

(*DOC III*, cat.2; digitised by the American Numismatic Society)

2.39. Zoe Porphyrogennete

Mosaic of Zoe Porphyrogennete and Constantine IX Monomachos to the right and left of Christ, respectively.

(Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, upper gallery; photograph is my own)



2.40. Zoe Porphyrogennete and Theodora

Manuscript illumination of *Homilies of St John Chrysostom*, depicting Zoe, Theodora, and Constantine IX Monomachos.

(Mount Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, *Homilies of St John Chrysostom*, Sinait.gr.364 fol.3r; Spatharakis, *Illuminated Portraits*, fig.66)

2.41. Zoe Porphyrogennete and Theodora

The 'Monomachos Crown' featuring the images of Constantine IX Monomachos (central panel), Zoe (left-hand panel) and Theodora (right-hand panel); the back four panels consist of dancing girls and allegorical figures.

(Hungary, Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, inv.99/1860; digitised by Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum)

2.42a. Zoe Porphyrogennete

Manuscript illumination from 'Madrid Skylitzes' with scene depicting Zoe's wedding to Michael IV the Paphlagonian.

(Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Synopsis of Histories*, MS Graecus Vitr.26-2 fol.206v, bottom; digitized by Biblioteca Digital Hispánica)

2.42b. Zoe Porphyrogennete and Theodora

Manuscript illumination from 'Madrid Skylitzes' with scene depicting the forceful tonsuring of Zoe's sister, Theodora.

(Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Synopsis of Histories*, MS Graecus Vitr.26-2 fol.204r, bottom; digitized by Biblioteca Digital Hispánica)

2.42c. Zoe Porphyrogennete

Manuscript illumination from 'Madrid Skylitzes' with scene depicting Zoe ordering the eunuch Sgouritzes to poison John Orphanotrophos, the eunuch brother of Michael IV the Paphlagonian.

(Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Synopsis of Histories*, MS Graecus Vitr.26-2 fol.212r, top; digitized by Biblioteca Digital Hispánica)

2.42d. Zoe Porphyrogennete and Theodora

Manuscript illumination from 'Madrid Skylitzes' with scene depicting Zoe's attempts to calm the mob.

(Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Synopsis of Histories*, MS Graecus Vitr.26-2 fol.220v, bottom; digitized by Biblioteca Digital Hispánica)

2.42e. Zoe Porphyrogennete

Manuscript illumination from 'Madrid Skylitzes' with scene depicting Zoe and Maria Sklerina in the 'royal box'.

(Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Synopsis of Histories*, MS Graecus Vitr.26-2 fol.227v; digitized by Biblioteca Digital Hispánica)

2.43. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Enamel disc of the bust of Zoe.

(Venice, Basilica Cattedrale Patriarcale di San Marco, Treasury, inv.N.93-108; photograph courtesy of William Watson)

2.44. Michael VII Doukas

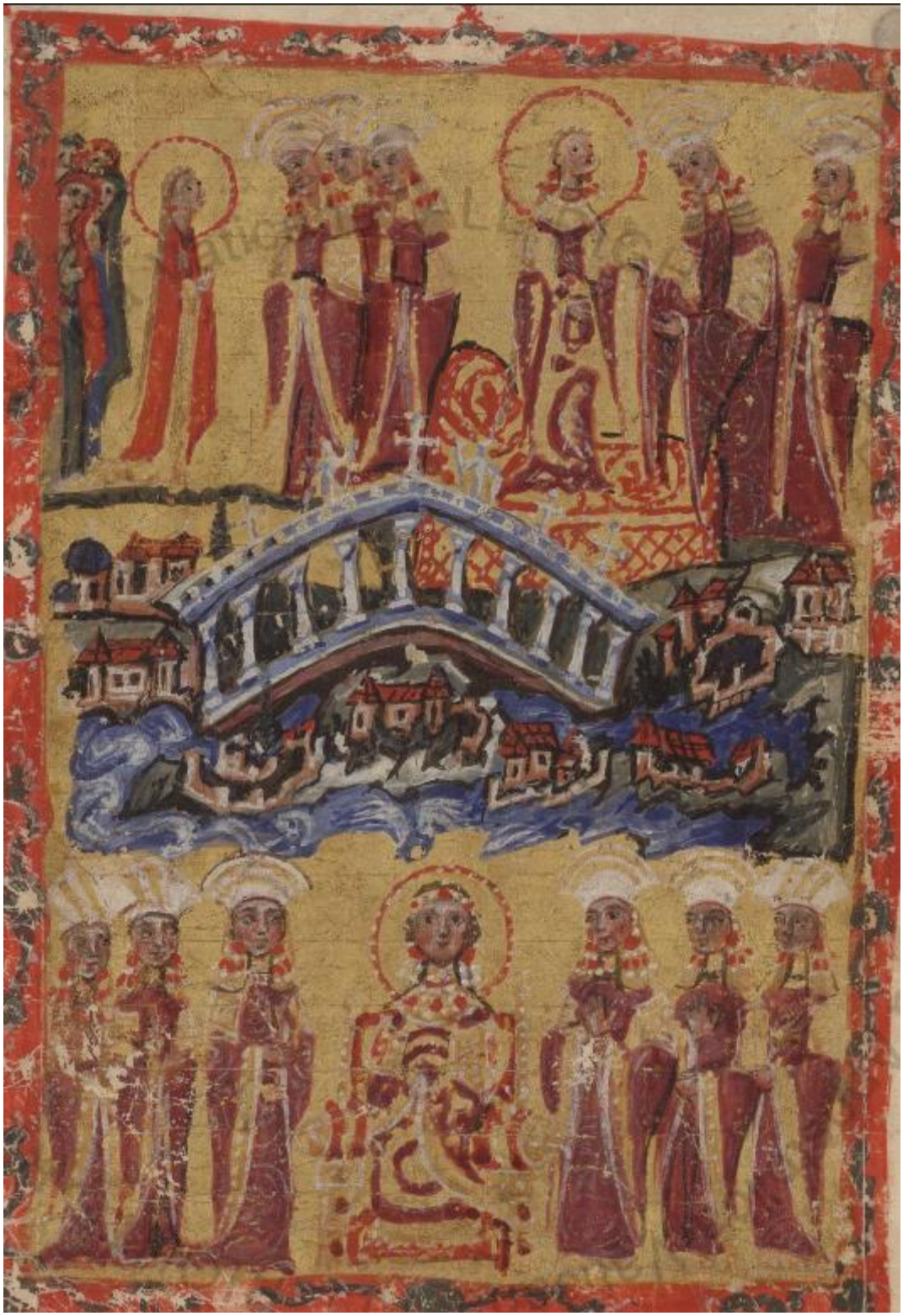
The Holy Crown of Hungary, focused on the three panels of Michael VII Doukas, Constantine Doukas and Geza I of Hungary.

(Budapest, Országház; Maguire, 'Images of the Court', p.187)

2.45. Maria of Antioch

Manuscript illumination from *Council Acts of 1166*, depicting the imperial portrait of Maria and Manuel I Komnenos.

(BAV, *Council Acts of 1166*, Vat.gr.1176, fol.2r; digitised by DigiVatLib)



2.46. Agnes-Anna of France

Folio of illuminated manuscript, *Epithalamium*, depicting the journey of a foreign-born princess sent to Constantinople for marriage.

(BAV, *Epithalamium*, Vat.gr.1851, fol.; digitised by DigiVatLib)

2.47. Piroška-Eirene of Hungary

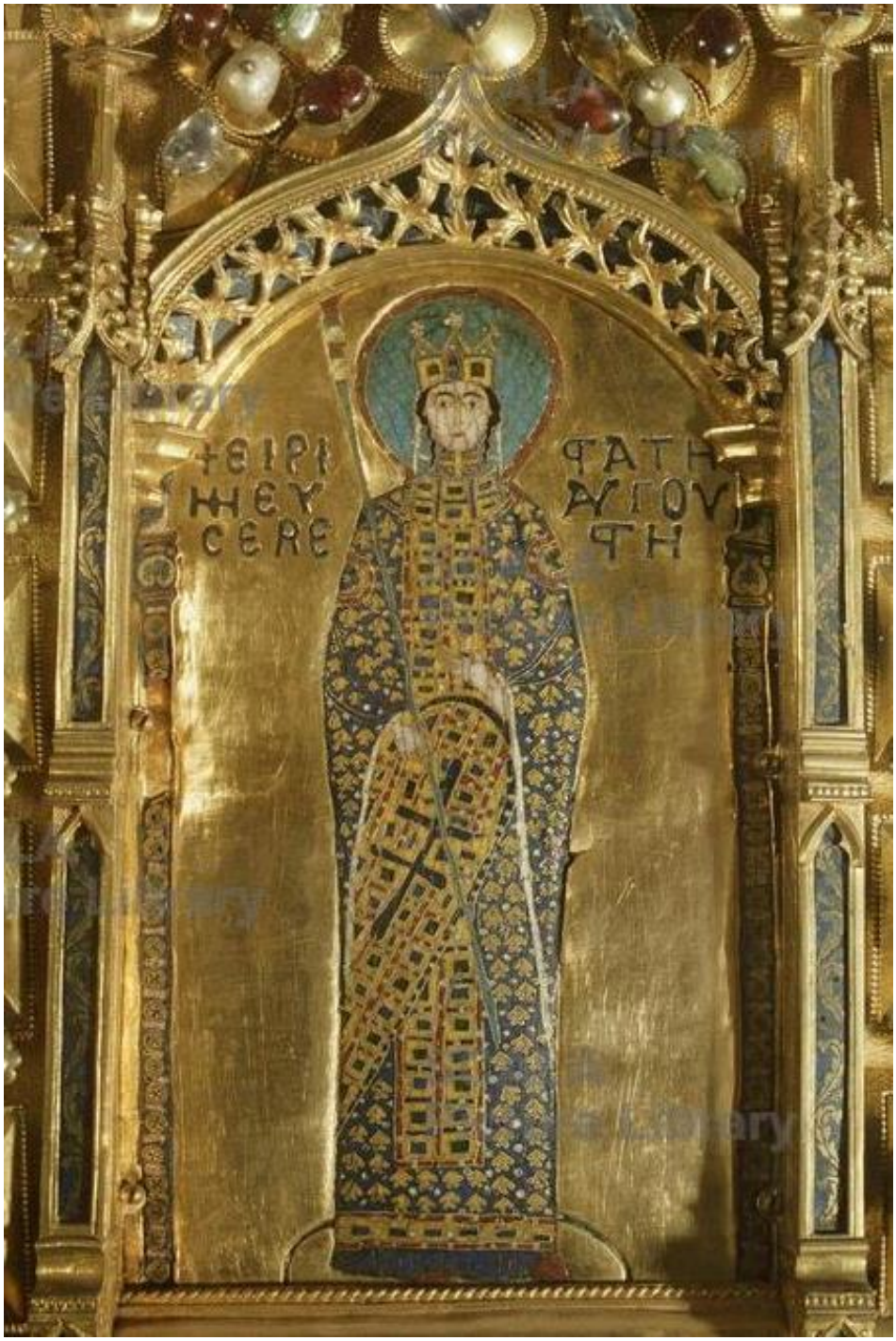
Mosaic of Piroška-Eirene and John II Komnenos offering gifts to the Virgin Mary and Christ Child between them – their son is portrayed to the right-hand side.

(Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, upper gallery; photograph is my own)

2.48. Piroška-Eirene of Hungary

Reverse of the lead seal of Piroška-Eirene, depicted in full-length.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.43; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)



2.49. Piroška-Eirene of Hungary

Enamel plaque, possibly depicting Piroška-Eirene.

(Venice, Basilica Cattedrale Patriarcale di San Marco, Pala d'Oro; digitised by Scala Archives, Florence)

2.50. Piroška-Eirene of Hungary

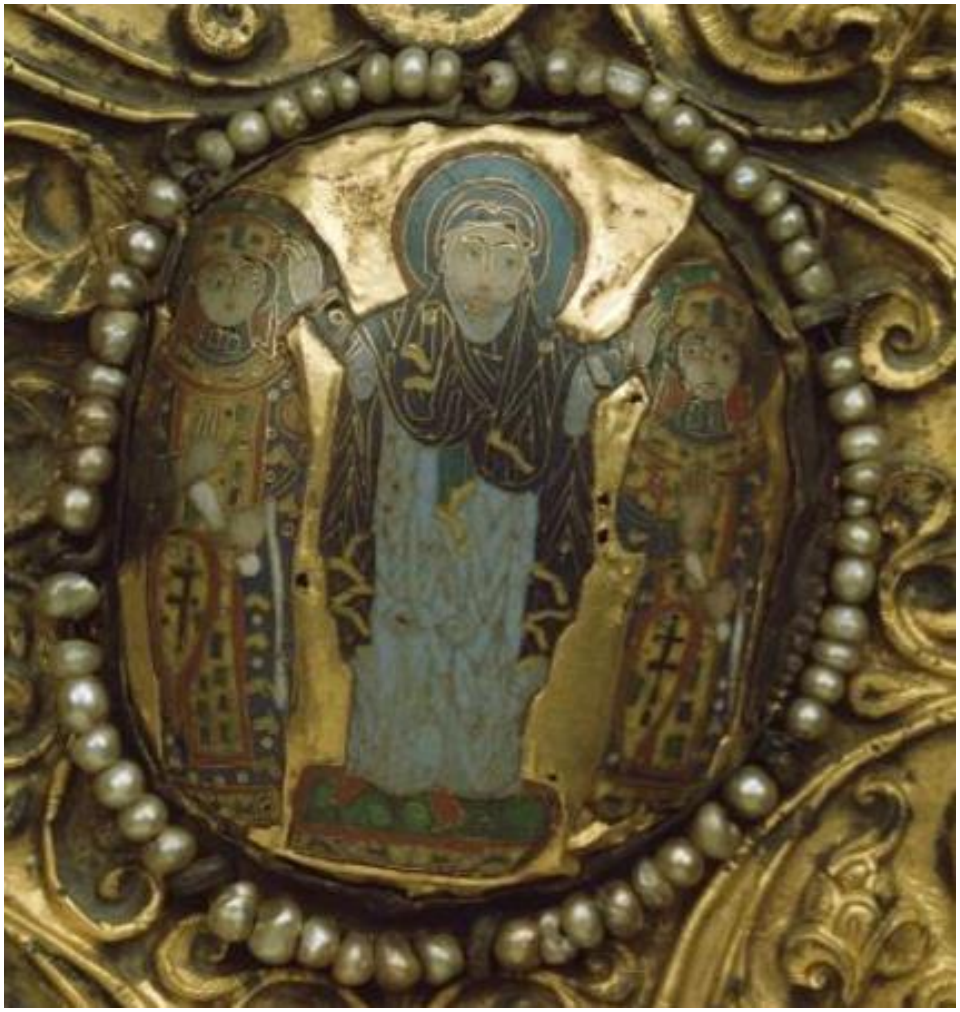
Folio of illuminated manuscript, *Gospels of John II Komnenos*, depicting an imperial couple with their son, with Christ and angels above.

(BAV, *Gospels of John II Komnenos*, Barb.gr.372, fol.5r; digitised by DigiVatLib)

2.51. Allegorical Figures

Folio of illuminated manuscript, depicting John II Komnenos and Alexios being crowned by Christ, who has allegorical figures on either side.

(BAV, Urb.gr.2, fol.19v; digitised by DigiVatLib)



2.52a. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Enamel medallion on right panel of Khakhuli Triptych, depicting two empresses blessed by Virgin Mary, who stands between them.

(Tbilisi, Georgian National Museum; Kotsis, 'Mothers of the Empire', p.6, fig.1)

2.52b. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Enamel medallion on left panel of Khakhuli Triptych, depicting an empress greeting John the Baptist.

(Tbilisi, Georgian National Museum; Kotsis, 'Mothers of the Empire', p.8, fig.3)

2.52c. Zoe Porphyrogennete:

Enamel medallion on left panel of Khakhuli Triptych, depicting an empress greeting an angel.

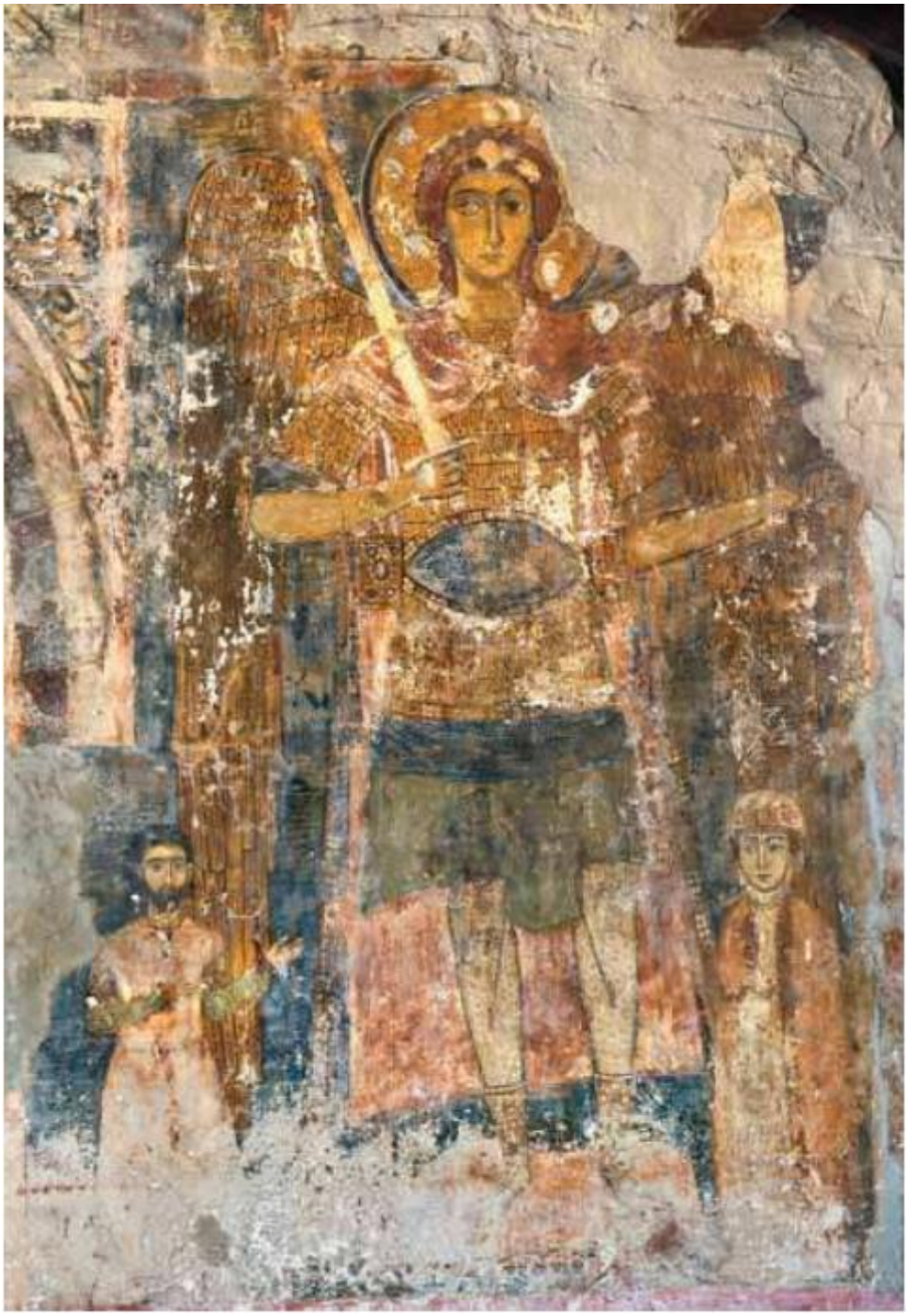
(Tbilisi, Georgian National Museum; Kotsis, 'Mothers of the Empire', p.7, fig.2)

3. The Representations of Late Byzantine Empresses

3.1. St. Theodora of Arta

Sarcophagus panel of Theodora Petraliphaina with Nikephoros I Komnenos Doukas.

(Arta, Church of Hagia Theodora; Brooks, 'Sculpture and the Late Byzantine Tomb', p.98.)



3.2. Eirene Komnene Doukaina

Fresco of the Archangel Gabriel with donors Michael Asen and Eirene Komnene Doukaina of Bulgaria.

(Kastoria, Agii Taxiarches Mitropoleos; Drakopoulou, 'Kastoria: Art, Patronage, and Society', p.123.)

3.3. Theodora Megale Komnene of Trebizond

Trapezuntine *asper* obverse and reverse, 1284-5.

(BIFA, ET.0118)

3.4. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina

Reverse of Seal A only; full-length image of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.1701; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.5. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina

Reverse of Seal B only; full-length image of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1947.2.370; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.6. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina

Reverse of Seal C only; full-length image of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.641; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.7. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina

Seal D; obverse, Virgin Mary and Christ Child on *thokos*. Reverse, full-length image of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina.

(BIFA, SL0165)

3.8. Yolande-Eirene of Montferrat

Reverse of seal only; full-length image of Yolande-Eirene.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1951.31.5.1704, digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.9. Thomais Komnene Doukaina Laskarina Kantakouzene Palaiologina

Miniature of Thomais and her husband, John Synadenos, with Virgin Mary and Christ Child above, from the manuscript of the *Bebaia Elpis typikon*.

(Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lincoln College gr. 35, f.2r)

3.10. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina

Illustrated copy of a possible mosaic in Constantinople depicting Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, Michael VIII Palaiologos and their son, Constantine.

(Du Cange, 233; digitised by the University of Mannheim, Baden-Württemberg)

3.11. Jelena of Anjou, Queen of Serbia

An icon of St Peter and Paul in the top register, Jelena blessed centrally, and Dragutin and Milutin in the bottom corners.

(Vatican Treasury; B. Ratliff, in Talbot 'Revival and Decline', cat.23.)

3.12. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina

Manuscript leaf of a thirteenth-century gospel containing a canon table with the monogram of a female member of the Palaiologan family.

(BAV, Vat.gr.1158 fol.5r; digitised by DigiVatLib)

3.13. Anna of Savoy

Obverse of *hyperpyron* of Anna of Savoy and John V Palaiologos.

(BIFA, 2000.0613.01)

3.14. Anna of Savoy

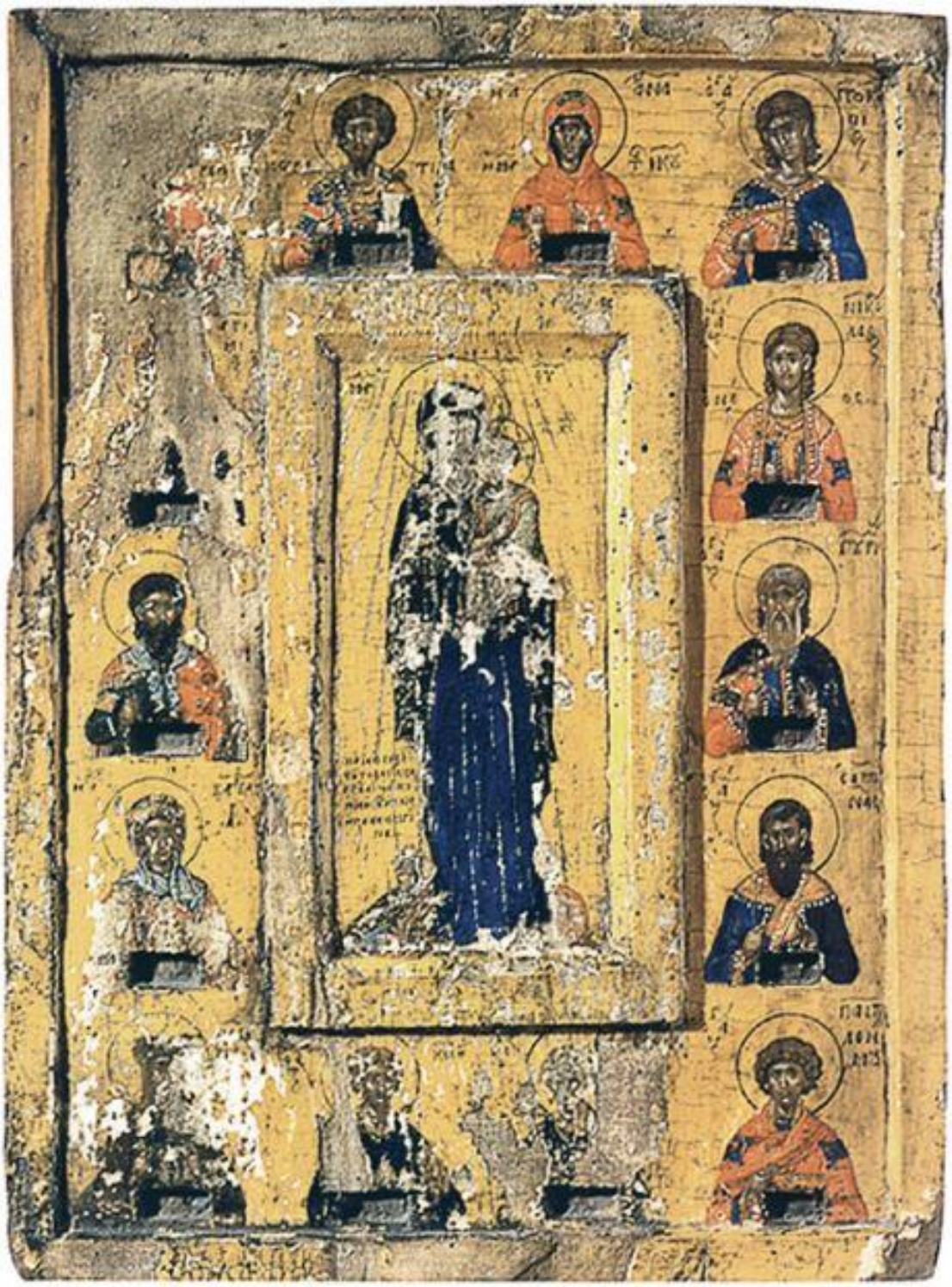
Reverse of seal only; full-length image of Anna of Savoy.

(Dumbarton Oaks Seal Collection, BZS.1958.106.639; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.15. Anna of Savoy

Miniature of Anna of Savoy, cut out of original manuscript.

(Stuttgart, Codex Hist. 20, fol.601; digitised by Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart)



3.16. Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina

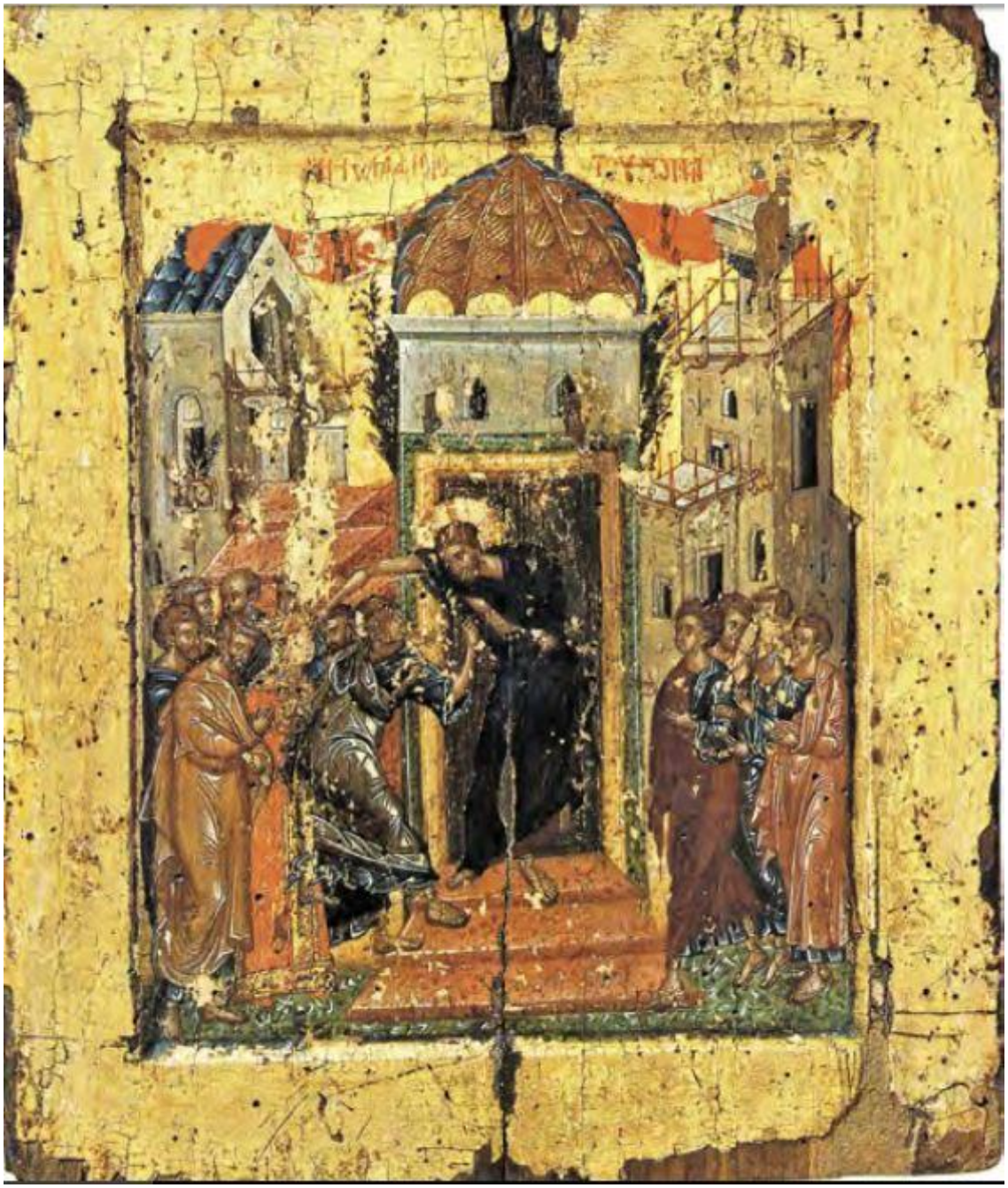
Reliquary icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ child, with Maria Angelina and Thomas Preljubović as kneeling donors.

(Meteora, Monastery of Transfiguration; L. Deriziotis, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', cat.24B.)

3.17. Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina

Cuenca Diptych containing an icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child, venerated by Maria Angelina, in the left-hand panel, and an icon of Christ, venerated by the now-destroyed Thomas Preljubović, in the right-hand panel.

(Cuenca, Diocesan Museum; A. Weyl Carr, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', cat.24C.)



3.18. Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina

Icon of the Doubting Thomas, with possible depiction of Maria Angelina to left of Christ.

(Meteora, Monastery of Transfiguration; L. Deriziotis, in Talbot, 'Revival and Decline', cat.24A.)

3.19. Virgin Mary

Sixteenth-century fresco of the Doubting Thomas scene, with the Virgin Mary as Maria Regina.

(Meteora, Barlaam Monastery; Gargova, 'The Meteora Icon', p.378)

3.20. Virgin Mary

Sixteenth-century fresco of the Doubting Thomas scene, with the Virgin Mary as Maria Regina.

(Zavorda, Hosios Nikanoras Monastery; Gargova, 'The Meteora Icon', p.380)

3.21. Icon of Akropolites

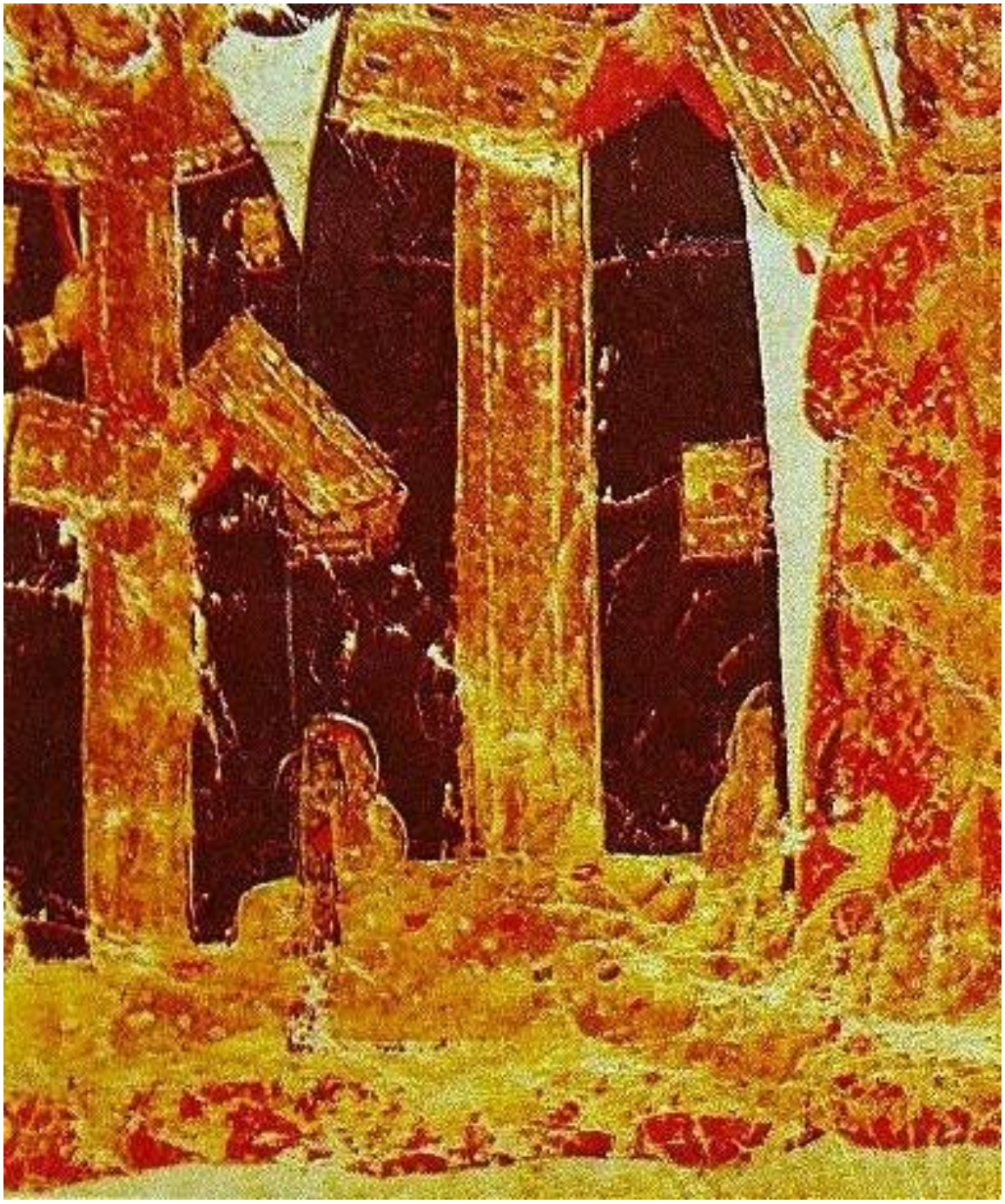
Icon of the Virgin Mary Hodegetria, with silver repoussè revetment which depicted the patrons Maria and Constantine Akropolites.

(Moscow, Tretyakov Gallery; E. Gladysheva, in Talbot 'Revival and Decline', cat.4.)

3.22a. Helena Dragaš

Manuscript frontispiece illumination depicting Helena Dragaš, Manuel II Palaiologos, and their children, John VII Palaiologos, Theodore, and Andronikos, blessed by the Virgin Mary and Christ Child.

(Paris, Musée du Louvre, MS. Ivoires A53)



3.22b. Helena Dragaš

Close up on detail of Manuel II Palaiologos' *sakkos*, from manuscript frontispiece illumination.

(Paris, Musée du Louvre, MS. Ivoires A53)

3.23a. Helena Dragaš

Ivory pyxis, with a focus on second imperial family, particularly the empress which may have been Helena Dragaš, and the beginning of the procession.

(Dumbarton Oaks Museum Collection, BZ.1936.24; photograph courtesy of Flavia Vanni)

3.23b. Helena Dragaš

Ivory pyxis, depicting the first imperial family, with the start of the donation procession.

(Dumbarton Oaks Museum Collection, BZ.1936.24; photograph courtesy of Flavia Vanni)

3.23c. Helena Dragaš

Ivory pyxis, depicting the positioning of the two imperial families.

(Dumbarton Oaks Museum Collection, BZ.1936.24; digitised by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection)

3.24. Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina

Line drawing of badly-damaged donor fresco in the exonarthex of the church. The original depicts Theodora, Andronikos II, Michael VIII, the Virgin Mary, and two anonymous figures, one of whom is significantly smaller (from the viewer's left to right).

(Albania, Apollonia, Church of St Mary; Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, p.104, fig.2.4b)

3.25. Theodora

Icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, which depicts Empress Theodora and Michael III in the top register among other iconodules, with the icon of the Hodegetria within.

(London, British Museum, inv.1988,0411.1; digitised by the British Museum)

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Agnellus — Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis,* ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH *Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. VI-IX* (Hannover, 1878); ed. D. M. Deliyannis, CCCM 199 (Turnhout, 2006), trans. D. M. Deliyannis, *Agnellus of Ravenna: The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna*, MTT (Washington D.C., 2004).

Akropolites — Constantine Akropolites, *Testament: Anastasis*, ed. H. Delehaye, 'Constantini Acropolitae hagiographi byzantini epistularum manipulus' *AnalBoll* 51 (1933), pp.263-84, pp.279-84; trans. A.-M. Talbot, '*Akropolites: Testament* of Constantine Akropolites for the Monastery of the Resurrection (*Anastasis*) in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Four* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.1374-82.

Alexiad — Anna Komnene, Ἀλεξιάς, ed. A. Kambylis & D. Reinsch, CFHB 40/1, 2 vols (Berlin, 2001), trans. E. R. A. Sewter & P. Sarris (ed.), *The Alexiad* (London, 1969, rev. 2009).

Ambrose — Ambrose of Milan, *De obitu Theodosii*, ed. O. Faller, CSEL 73 (Vienna, 1955), pp.369-401, trans. J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz,

with C. Hill (eds.), *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches,* TTH 43 (Liverpool, 2005), pp.174-203.

Anargyroi Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, *Typikon: Anargyroi*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues* (Brussels, 1921), pp.136-40; trans. A.-M. Talbot, '*Anargyroi: Typikon* of Theodora Palaiologina for the Convent of Sts. Kosmas and Damian in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Three* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.1287-94.

Anekdota Prokopios of Caesarea, Ἀπόκρυφη Ἱστορία, ed. J. Haury, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia,* 3 vols (Leipzig, 1905), trans. G. A. Williamson & P. Sarris (ed.), *The Secret History* (London, 1966, repr. 2007).

AOC II *Concilium Universale Chalcedonensis* 1, ed. E. Schwartz, *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* II (Berlin, 1933), trans. K. G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkley, CA, 1982), p.216.

Bebaia Elpis Theodora Palaiologina Synadene, *Typikon: Bebaia Elpis*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues* (Brussels, 1921), pp.18-105; trans. A.-M. Talbot, '*Bebaia Elpis*: *Typikon* of Theodora Synadene for the Convent

of the Mother of God *Bebaia Elpis* in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Four* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.1512-78.

BOC I Constantine VIII Porphyrogennetos, *Ἔκθεσις τῆς βασιλείου τάξεως*, ed. J. J. Reiske, CSHB 16 (Bonn, 1829), trans. A. Moffatt & M. Tall (eds.), *The Book of Ceremonies, Volume One,* BA 18 (Canberra, 2012).

BOC II Constantine VIII Porphyrogennetos, *Ἔκθεσις τῆς βασιλείου τάξεως,* ed. J. J. Reiske, CSHB 17 (Bonn, 1830), trans. A. Moffatt & M. Tall (eds.), *The Book of Ceremonies, Volume Two,* BA 18 (Canberra, 2012).

Buildings Prokopios of Caesarea, Περὶ Κτισμάτων, ed. J. Haury, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia,* 3 vols (Leipzig, 1905-13), trans. H. B. Dewing, *The Buildings, Volume 7,* Loeb 343 (Cambridge, MA, 1940).

Chalk. Laonikos Chalkokondyles, Ἀποδείξεις Ἱστοριῶν, ed. I. Bekker, CHSB 31 (Bonn, 1843), part. trans. D. C. Agoritsas, 'Maria Angelina Doukaina Palaiologina and Her Depictions in Post-Byzantine Mural Paintings', *ZRVI* 51 (2014), p.171-85.

Choniates	Niketas Choniates, Ἱστορία, ed. J.-L. van Dieten, CFHB 11 (Berlin, 1975), trans. H. J. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates,* Byzantine Texts in Translation (Detroit, MI, 1984).
Chron. Fred.	*Chronicle, Book IV,* ed. & trans. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar: with its Continuations,* Mediaeval Classics (London, 1960).
Chron. Ioann.	*Chronicle of Ioannina*, ed. L. Vranousis, Το Χρονικόν των Ιωαννίνων κατ' ανέκδοτον δημώδη επιτομήν, Επετηρίς του Μεσαιωνικού Αρχείου 12 (1962), pp.57-115, pp.74-101; part. trans. D. M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267-1479: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984).
Chron. Pasch.	*Chronicon Paschale,* ed. L. Dindorf, CSHB 9 (Bonn, 1832), trans. M. Whitby & M. Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale, 284-628 AD,* TTH 7 (Liverpool, 1989).
Clavijo	Ruy González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlán,* ed. F. López Estrada (Madrid, 1943), trans. G. le Strange, *Embassy to Tamerlane* (London, 1928).

Cod. Iust.	*Codex Iustinianus, Corpus Iuris Civilis*, ed. P. Krueger & T. Mommsen, 3 vols (Berlin, 1928-9).
Cyril	Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses, PG* 33, part. trans. J. W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding the True Cross* (Leiden, 1992), p.82.
Du Cange	Charles du Fresne, sieur du Cange, *Familiae augustae byzantinae seu stemmata Imperatoribus christianis* (Paris, 1680; Venice, 1729).
Embassy	Liutprand of Cremona, *The Embassy of Liudprand, the Cremonese Bishop, to the Constantinopolitan Emperor Nicephorus Phocas on Behalf of the August Ottos & Adelheid,* ed. P. Chiesa, *Liudprandi Cremonensis Opera Omnia*, CCCM 156 (Turnhout, 1998), trans. P. Squatriti (ed.), *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona,* MTT (Washington D.C., 2007), pp. 238-84.
Epist. M. C.	Manuel Chrysoloras, *Epistles*, *PG* 156, 45ff; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), pp.250-3.

Epit.Adel	Odo of Cluny, *Epitaph of Adelheid*, ed. B. Schütte, MGH SRG 66 (Hannover, 1994), trans. S. Gilsdorf, *Queenship and Sanctity: The* Lives *of Mathilda and the* Epitaph *of Adelheid* (Washington, D.C., 2004), pp.128-44.
Eusebius	Eusebius of Caesarea, Βίος Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου, ed. F. Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantins* (Berlin, 1975, rev. 1992), trans. Av. Cameron & S. G. Hall (eds.), *Life of Constantine*, Clarendon Ancient History Series (Oxford, 1999).
Eutropius	Eutropius, *Brevarium ab Urbe Condita*, ed. F. Ruehl (Stuttgart, 1887), trans. H.W. Bird (ed.), *Eutropius: Breviarium,* TTH 14 (Liverpool, 1993, repr. 2011).
Evagrios	Evagrios Scholastikos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία, ed. J. Bidez & L. Parmentier (London, 1898), trans. M. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, TTH 33 (Liverpool, 2000).
Fontem	*De sacris aedibus Deiparae ad Fontem, ASS,* Nov. III 880BC; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), pp.156-7.

Froissart	Jean Froissart, *Chronique*, ed. J. A. C. Buchon, 3 vols (Paris, 1840), trans. G. Brereton, *Froissart: Chronicles* (London, 1968, repr. 1978).
Grande Église	Mateos, J. (ed. & trans.), *Le typicon de la Grande Église, MS. Sainte-Croix no.40, Xe siècle, I: Le Cycle des Douze Mois*, Orientalia christiana analecta 165-6 (Rome, 1962).
John Eph.	John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints,* ed. E. W. Brooks *Patrologia Orientalis* 17 (Paris, 1923-6).
John Lyd.	John the Lydian, Περὶ ἀρχῶν τῆς Ῥωμαίων πολιτείας*,* ed. & trans. A. C. Bandy, *Ioannes Lydus: On Powers, or, The Magistracies of the Roman State*, Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 149 (Philadelphia, 1983).
Kallikles	Nicholas Kallikles, *On the Tomb of the Despina*, ed. R. Romano, *Carmi* (Naples, 1980), pp.93-9; trans. C.-N. Gaşpar, *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), Appendix 3.
Kecharitomene	Eirene Doukaina Komnene, *Typikon: Kecharitomene*, ed. P. Gautier, 'Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitôménè', *REB* 43 (1985), pp.5-165, pp.19-155; trans. R. Jordan, '*Kecharitomene: Typikon* of Empress Irene Doukaina Komnene

for the Convent of the Mother of God *Kecharitomene* in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Two* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.649-724.

Kinnamos — John Kinnamos, Ἐπιτομὴ, ed. A. Meineke, CSHB 13 (Bonn, 1836), trans. C. M. Brand, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus,* Records of Civilisation: Sources and Studies 95 (New York, NY, 1976).

Leo. Gram. — Leo Grammatikos, Χρονογραφία τά τών νέων Βασιλέων περιέχονσα, ed. I. Bekker, *Leonis Grammatici Chronographia,* CSHB 31 (Bonn, 1842).

Leone — *Scriptor incertus de Leone Armenio,* ed. I. Bekker, in the edition of *Leo Grammatikos*, CSHB 31 (Bonn, 1842), p.335 ff; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), p.157.

Liber gest. — Arnulf of Milan, *Liber gestorum recentium*, ed. C. Zey, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1994).

Lips — Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina, *Typikon: Lips*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues* (Brussels, 1921), pp.106-36; trans. A.-M. Talbot, *'Lips:*

Typikon of Theodora Palaiologina for the Convent of Lips in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Three* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.1254-86.

Malalas — John Malalas, Χρονογραφία ed. L. Dindorf, CSHB 32 (Bonn, 1831), trans. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys, & R. Scott (eds.), *Chronographia,* BA 4 (Melbourne, 1986).

Mansi — *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collection,* ed. G. D. Mansi, 31 vols (Florence & Venice, 1758-98, repr. Paris, 1901-27).

Manuel — Manuel II Palaiologos, *Dialogue with the Empress-Mother on Marriage,* ed. & trans. A. Angelou (Vienna, 1991).

Marcellinus — Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen (Berlin, 1894), trans. B. Croke, *The Chronicle of Marcellinus: A Translation and Commentary,* BA 7 (Sydney, 1995).

Mesarites — Nikolaos Mesarites, *Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles, Constantinople*, ed. A. Heisenberg, *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche Zwei Basiliken Konstantins: Untersuchungen zue Kunst und Literatur des ausgehenden Altertums* II (Leipzig, 1908), pp.10-96, trans. M. Angold, *Nicholas Mesarites: His*

	Life and Works (in Translation) TTB 4 (Liverpool, 2017), pp.75-133.
Metochites	Theodore Metochites, Μονωδία ἐπί τή βασιλίδι Θεοδώρα τή τού βασιλέως μητρί, part. ed. & trans. A.-M. Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina: Wife of Michael VIII', *DOP* 46 (1992), pp.295-303.
Mystikos	Nikolaos I Mystikos, *Letters*, ed. & trans. R. J. H. Jenkins & L. G. Westerink, *Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters. Greek Text and English Translation,* CFHB 6; DOT 2 (Washington D.C., 1973).
Nike. Pat.	Nikephoros, Ιστορία σύντομος, ed. C. de Boor, *Nicephori opuscula historica* (Leipzig, 1880), trans. C. Mango (ed.), *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople: Short History*, DOT 10, CFHB 13 (Washington D.C., 1990).
Orat. Leo	Leo VI, *Oraison funèbre de Basile I par son fils Léon VI le Sage* ed. A. Vogt & I. Hausherr, Orientalia Christiana Periodica 26 (Rome, 1932).
Pachymeres	Georgios Pachymeres, Ιστορία, ed. A. Failler, CFHB 24; trans. V. Laurent, *Pachymères, Georges, Relations historique* (Paris, 1984).

Parastaseis	Παραστάσεις σύντομοι χρονικαί, ed. T. Preger, *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum* vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1901), trans. Av. Cameron & J. Herrin (eds.), *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai,* Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 10 (Leiden, 1984).
Patria	Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, ed. T. Preger, *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1902), trans. A. Berger (ed.), *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The* Patria, DOML 24 (Cambridge, MA, 2013).
P.D. Institutio	Peter Damian, *Institutio monialis*, Opusculum 50; *PL* 145, col.744.
Philanthropos	Eirene Choumnaina Palaiologina, *Typikon: Philanthropos*, ed. Ph. Meyer, 'Bruchstücke zweier *typika ktetorika*', *BZ* 4 (1895), pp.45-58, p.48-9; trans. A.-M. Talbot, '*Philanthropos: Typikon* of Irene Choumnaina for the Convent of Christ Philanthropos in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Four* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.1383-8.
Pantokrator	John II Komnenos, *Typikon: Pantokrator,* ed. P. Gautier, 'Le typikon du Christ Saveur Pantocrator', *REB* 32 (1974), pp.1-

145; trans. R. Jordan, '*Pantokrator: Typikon* of Emperor John II Komnenos for the Monastery of Christ *Pantokrator* in Constantinople', in A. C. Hero & J. Thomas (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents, Volume Two* (Washington D.C., 2000), pp.725-81.

Paul Sil. Paul the Silentiary, *Descriptio Sanctae Sophiae Descriptio Ambonis*, ed. P. Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius: Kuntsbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit,* Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Commentare 8 (Leipzig & Berlin, 1912), trans C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), p.80-91, 91-96.

Prodromos Theodore Prodromos, *A Funeral Verse for the Blessed Empress of the Romans,* kyra *Eirene*, ed. W. Hörandner, *Historische Gedichte* Wiener Byzantinistische Studien 11 (Vienna, 1974), pp.229-30; trans. G. Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars* (Budapest, 1970), p.76.

Psellos Michael Psellos, Χρονογραφία, ed. E. Renaud, 2 vols (Paris, 1926-8), trans. E. R. A. Sewter, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: The* Chronographia *of Michael Psellus* (London, 1966).

Pseudo. Pseudo-Kodinos, Τακτικόν περί των οφφικίων του Παλατίου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως και των οφφικίων της Μεγάλης Εκκλησίας, ed. J. Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des offices,* Monde byzantine 1 (Paris, 1966), trans. R. J. Macrides, J. A. Munitiz, & D. Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies,* Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies 15 (Farnham, 2013).

Radegund Venantius Fortunatus, *The Life of the Holy Radegund,* ed. B. Krusch, *Presbyteri Italici, Opera Pedestria,* MGH SRM 2:358-405 (Berlin, 1885), trans. J. E. Halborg, J. A. McNamara, & E. Gordon Whatley (eds.), *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (London & Durham, NC, 1992), pp.70-105.

Rossi H. Rossi, *Historiarum Ravennatum libri decem* (Venice, 1572), p.85-6, trans. C. Davis-Weyer (ed.), *Early Medieval Art, 300-1150: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986), p.16.

Skylitzes John Skylitzes, Σύνοψις Ἱστοριῶν, ed. H. Thurn, CFHB 5 (Berlin & New York, NY, 1973), trans. J. Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057* (Cambridge, 2010).

Sathas	Μεσαιωνική βιβλιοθήκη, ed. K. N. Sathas, *Bibliotheca graeca medii aevi*, 7 vols (Venice & Paris, 1872-94).
Sphrantzes	Georgios Sphrantzes, Χρονικόν, ed. V. Grecu, *Memorii 1401-1477* (Bucharest, 1966), trans. M. Carroll, *The Sphrantzes Chronicle: A Contemporary Greek Source for the Siege of Constantinople, 1453* (Amsterdam, 1985).
Suetonius	Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *De Vita Caesarum,* ed. M. Ihm, *Suetonius De vita Caesarum libri viii* (Leipzig, 1908), trans. C. Edwards, *Suetonius: Lives of the Caesars,* Oxford World's Classics (Oxford, 2000).
Synax.CP.	*Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. H. Delehaye, Propylaeum ad ASS Nov., (Brussels, 1902).
Synax.PE.	ed. S. Kotzabassi, in S. Kotzabassi (ed.), *The Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople* (Berlin & Boston, MA, 2013), pp.170-5; trans. P. Magdalino, 'The Foundation of the Pantokrator Monastery in its Urban Setting', in S. Kotzabassi (ed.), *The Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople* (Berlin & Boston, MA, 2013), pp.50-5.

Tacitus — Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *Annales*, ed. & trans. M. Grant, *Tacitus: The Annals of Imperial Rome* (London, 1956, rev & repr. 1996).

Theitmar — Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon,* ed. R. Holtzmann, MGH SRG 9 (Berlin, 1935), trans. D. A. Warner, *Ottonian Germany: The* Chronicon *of Thietmar of Merseburg,* Manchester Medieval Sources (Manchester & New York, NY, 2001).

S. Theodori — Gregory of Nyssa, *Laudatio S. Theodori*, ed. J. P. Migne, *PG* 46, (Paris, 1863), 737, trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), p.36-7.

Theodoret — Theodoret of Kyrrhos, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία, ed. L. Parmentier (Berlin, 1954); trans. B. Jackson, *The Writings of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, *Series II, Vol. III* (Oxford, 1892).

Theophanes — Theophanes the Confessor, Χρονογραφία, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1883; repr. Hildesheim/New York, NY, 1980), trans. C. Mango & R. Scott, with G. Greatrex (eds.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813* (Oxford, 1997).

Theo. Cont.	Theophanes Continuatus, Χρονογραφία, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB 45 (Bonn, 1838).
To Romanos	Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, Προς τον ίδιον υιόν Ρωμανόν, ed. G. Moravcsik (Washington D.C., 1966), trans. R. J. H. Jenkins, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus: De Administrando Imperio* (Washington D.C., 1966, repr. 2008).
Venantius	Venantius Fortunatus, *Opera Poetica,* ed. F. Leo, MGH *AA* 4 (Berlin, 1894), trans. J. George, *Venantius Fortunatus: Personal and Political Poems* (Liverpool, 1995).
VBasil	Theophanes Continuatus, *Vita Basilii*, in Theophanes Continuatus, Χρονογραφία, V, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB 45 (Bonn, 1838), 321ff; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009), pp.192-9.
VDan.	*Vita S. Danielis Stylitae*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Subsidia hagiographica* 14 (Paris, 1923), trans. E. Dawes & N. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver* (Oxford, 1948).

VMath. *Vita of Mathilda*, ed. B. Schütte, MGH SRG 66 (Hannover, 1994), trans. S. Gilsdorf, *Queenship and Sanctity: The* Lives *of Mathilda and the* Epitaph *of Adelheid* (Washington, D.C., 2004), pp.71-127.

VNike. Ignatios the Deacon, *Life of St Nikephoros*, BHG 1335, ed. C. de Boor, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opuscula historica* (Leipzig, 1880; repr. New York. NY, 1975), pp.139-217; trans. E. A. Fisher, 'Life of the Patriarch Nikephoros I of Constantinople', in A.-M. Talbot (ed.), *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Washington D.C., 1998), pp. 25-142.

VTheo. *Life of St. Theodora of Arta,* BHG 1736, PG 127:903-8; trans. A.-M. Talbot (ed.) *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Washington D.C., 1996), pp.327-33.

Wars Prokopios of Caesarea*,* Ὑπὲρ τῶν Πολέμων Λόγοι*,* ed. J. Haury, *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia,* 3 vols (Leipzig, 1905-13), trans. H. B. Dewing, *History of the Wars, Volume 1: Books 1-2,* Loeb 48 (Cambridge, MA, 1914).

Zosimus Zosimus, Ἱστορία Νέα, ed. L. Mendelssohn (Leipzig, 1887), trans. R. T. Ridley (ed.), *Zosimus: New History*, BA 2 (Canberra, 1982).

Secondary Sources

Agoritsas, D. C. 'Maria Angelina Doukaina Palaiologina and Her Depictions in Post-Byzantine Mural Paintings', *ZRVI* 51 (2014), pp.171-85.

Ağtürk, T. S. 'A New Tetrarchic Relief from Nicomedia: Embracing Emperors', *AJA* 122.3 (2018), pp.411-26.

Alchermes, J. D. 'Art and Architecture in the Age of Justinian', in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005), pp.343-75.

Alcouffe, D. 'Classical, Byzantine and Western Hardstone-Carving', in D. Buckton, with C. Entwistle & R. Prior (eds.), *The Treasury of San Marco* (Milan, 1984), pp.73-105.

Anderson, B. 'Classified Knowledge: The Epistemology of Statuary in the Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai', *BMGS* 35.1 (2011), pp.1-19.

Andreescu-Treadgold, I. & Treadgold, W. 'Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale', *ArtBull* 79.4 (1997), pp.708-23.

Angelova, D. N. 'The Ivories of Ariadne and Idea about Female Imperial Authority in Rome and Early Byzantium', *Gesta* 43.1 (2004), pp.1-15.

Angelova, D. N. *Sacred Founders: Women, Men, and Gods in the Discourse of Imperial Founding, Rome through Early Byzantium* (Oakland, CA, 2014).

Arikan, C. & Rhoby, A. 'The Church of Saints Sergios and Bakchos', prepared by I. Toth & A. Rhoby, *Materials for the Study of Late Antique and Medieval*

Greek and Latin Inscriptions in Istanbul: A Revised and Expanded Booklet (Oxford & Vienna, 2020), pp.23-8.

Baert, B., trans. Preedy, L., *A Heritage of Holy Wood: The Legend of the True Cross in Text and Image* (Leiden & Boston, MA, 2004).

Baker, D. 'Politics, Precedence and Intentions: Aspects of the Imperial Mosaics at San Vitale, Ravenna', in B. Wheeler (ed.), *Representations of the Feminine in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1993), pp.175-216.

Ball, J. *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth to Twelfth-Century Painting* (Basingstoke & New York, NY, 2005).

Barber, C. 'Imperial Panels at San Vitale: A Reconsideration', *BMGS* 14 (1990), pp.19-42.

Bardill, J. 'The Church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople and the Monophysite Refugees', *DOP* 54 (2000), pp.1-11.

Bardill, J. 'The Date, Dedication, and Design of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople', *JLA* 10.1 (2017), pp.62-103.

Barnes, T. D. *Constantine and Eusebius* (London & Cambridge, MA, 1981).

Barzman, K.-E. 'Beyond the Canon: Feminists, Postmodernists, and the History of Art', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52.3 (1994), pp.327-38.

Bassett, S. *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge, 2004).

Beard, M. *Women and Power: A Manifesto* (Cambridge, 2017).

Belting, H. *Das Illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft* (Hiedelburg, 1970).

Belting, H. *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago, IL, 1994).

Belting, H. & Buchthal, H. *Patronage in Thirteenth-Century Constantinople: An Atelier of Late Byzantine Book Illumination and Calligraphy* (Washington D.C., 1978).

Belting, H., Mango, C. & Mouriki, D. *The Mosaics and Frescoes of St Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul* (Washington D.C., 1978).

Bendall, S. *An Introduction to the Coinage of the Empire of Trebizond* (London, 2015).

Bensammer, E. 'La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification: Recherches sur les sources byzantines de la fin du VIIIe siècle à la fin du XIIe siècle', *Byz* 46 (1976), pp.243-91.

Benz St. John, L. *Three Medieval Queens: Queenship and the Crown in Fourteenth-Century England* (New York, NY, 2012).

Berger, A. 'Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions in Constantinople', in N. Necipoğlu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life* (Leiden, 2001), pp.73-87.

Bettini, S. 'Venice, the Pala d'Oro, and Constantinople', in D. Buckton, with C. Entwistle & R. Prior (eds.), *The Treasury of San Marco* (Milan, 1984), pp.35-64.

Blake, S. A. *Competition or Admiration? Byzantine Visual Culture in Western Imperial Courts, 497-1002* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2015).

Boeck, E. N. *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illuminated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses* (New York, NY, 2015).

Borgehammer, S. *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend* (Stockholm, 1991).

Borzelleca, J. F. & Lane, R. W. 'Harming and Helping through Time: The History of Toxicology', in A. Wallace Hayes (ed.), *Principles and Methods of Toxicology, Fifth Edition* (Andover, MA, 2008), pp.3-43.

Brilliant, R. *Portraiture* (Cambridge, MA, 1991).

Brilliant, R. 'Forwards and Backwards in the Historiography of Roman Art', *JRA* 20 (2007), pp.7-24.

Brooks, S. 'Sculpture and the Late Byzantine Tomb', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.95-115.

Brubaker, L. 'To Legitimise an Emperor: Constantine and Visual Authority in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries', in P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries: Papers from the Twenty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992*, SPBS 2 (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 139-58.

Brubaker, L. 'Memories of Helena: Patterns in Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries', in L. James (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs* (London & New York, NY, 1997), pp.52-75.

Brubaker, L. *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Images as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999).

Brubaker, L. 'The Chalke Gate, the Construction of the Past, and the Trier Ivory', *BMGS* 23 (1999), pp.258-85.

Brubaker, L. 'Topography and the Creation of Public Space in Early Medieval Constantinople', in M. de Jong, C. van Rhijn, & F. Theuws (eds.), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2001), pp.31-44.

Brubaker, L. 'Sex, Lies and Textuality: The Secret History of Prokopios and the Rhetoric of Gender in Sixth-Century Byzantium', in L. Brubaker & J. H. M. Smith (eds.), *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900* (Cambridge & New York, NY, 2004), pp.83-101.

Brubaker, L. 'The Age of Justinian: Gender and Society', in M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005), pp.427-47.

Brubaker, L. 'Pictures are Good to Think with: Looking at Byzantium', in P. A. Agapitos, M. Hinterberger, & P. Odorico (eds.), *L'Écriture de la Mémoire: la Littérarité de l'Historiographie. Actes du IIIe colloque international philologique, Nicosie, 6-7-8 mai 2004* (Paris, 2006), pp.221-40.

Brubaker, L. 'Gesture in Byzantium', in M. J. Braddick (ed.), *The Politics of Gesture: Historical Perspectives* (Oxford, 2009), pp.36-56.

Brubaker, L. 'Gender and Gesture', in A. Olsen Lam & R. Schroeder (eds.), *The Eloquence of Art: Essays in Honour of Henry Maguire* (Abingdon, 2020), pp.47-70.

Brubaker, L. & Haldon, J. *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c.680-850: A History* (Cambridge, 2011).

Brubaker, L. & Haldon, J. *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c.680-850: The Sources: An Annotated Survey* (London & New York, NY, 2017).

Brubaker, L. & Tobler, H. 'The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)', *Gender & History* 12.3 (2000), pp.572-94.

Bruns, G. *Staatskameen des 4. Jahrhunderts nach Christi Geburt* (Berlin, 1948).

Bryer, A. 'Greeks and Turkmens: The Pontic Exception', *DOP* 29 (1975), pp.113-48.

Buckley, P. *The* Alexiad *of Anna Komnene: Artistic Strategy in the Making of a Myth* (Cambridge, 2014).

Buckton, D. & J. Osborne, 'The Enamel of Doge Ordelaffo Falier on the Pala d'Oro in Venice', *Gesta* 39.1 (2000), pp.43-9.

Burgess, R. W. 'The Summer of Blood: The "Great Massacre" of 337 and the Promotion of the Sons of Constantine', *DOP* 62 (2008), pp.5-51.

Butler, J. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY, 1990).

Cagnat, R. (ed.), *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes* (Paris, 1906).

Calaharro, 'El marfil de Tréveris: una iconografía clave en el context de la propaganda politico-religiosa del Triunfo de la Ortodoxia', *Erytheia: Revista de Estudios Bizantinos Y Neogriegos* 39 (2018), pp.9-54.

Cameron, Av. 'The Empress Sophia', *Byz* 45 (1975), pp.5-21.

Cameron, Av. 'The Early Cult of the Virgin', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens & Milan, 2000), pp.3-15.

Chatterjee, P. 'Iconoclasm's Legacy: Interpreting the Trier Ivory', *ArtBull* 100.3 (2018), pp.28-47.

Cheynet, J.-C & Vannier, J.-F. *Études Prosopographiques* (Paris, 1986).

Ciggaar, K. 'Theophano: An Empress Reconsidered', in A. Davids, (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.49-63.

Clark, E. 'Ideology, History and the Construction of 'Woman' in Late Antique Christianity', *JECS* 2.2 (1994), pp.155-84.

Clark, E. 'The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the 'Linguistic Turn'', *Church History* 67 (1998), pp.1-31.

Connor, C. L. 'The Epigram in the Church of Hagios Polyeuktos in Constantinople and its Byzantine Response', *Byz* 69 (1999), pp.479-527.

Connor, C. L. *Women of Byzantium* (New Haven, CT, 2004).

Constantinou, S. 'Performing Gender in Lay Saints' Lives', *BMGS* 38 (2014), pp.24-32.

Corrigan, K. *Visual Polemics in the Ninth Century Byzantine Psalters* (Cambridge, 1992).

Cormack, R. 'Interpreting the Mosaics of Saint Sophia at Istanbul', *Art History* 4 (1981), pp.131-49.

Cormack, R. *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (London, 1985).

Cormack, 'But is it Art?', in J. Shepard & S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers form the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, SPBS 1 (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 219-36.

Crawford, M. H. *Roman Republican Coinage* (London & New York, NY, 1974).

Croke, B. 'Dynasty and Ethnicity: Emperor Leo I and the Eclipse of Aspar', *Chiron* 35 (2005), pp.147-203.

Croke, B. 'Justinian, Theodora, and the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus', *DOP* 60 (2006), pp.25-63.

Ćurčić, S. 'Religious Settings of the Late Byzantine Sphere', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.65-93.

Currie, C. 'Glorious Noise of Empire', in A. Öztürkmen & E. B. Vitz (eds.), *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Turnhout, 2014), pp.425-49.

Cutler, A. 'From Loot to Scholarship: Changing Modes in the Italian Response to Byzantine Artifacts, ca.1200-1700', *DOP* 49 (1995), pp.237-67.

Cutler, A. 'The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory', in C. Moss & K. Kiefer (eds.), *Byzantine East and Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton, NJ, 1995), pp.605-10.

Cutler, A. & Oikonomidès, N. 'An Imperial Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hands', *ArtBull* 70.1 (1988), pp.77-87.

Cvetković, B. 'The Investiture Relief in Arta, Epiros', *ZRVI* 33 (1994), pp.103-13.

Dagron, G. *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Paris, 1996; trans. & repr. Cambridge, 2003).

Davids, A. (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995).

Dawson, T. G. 'The Monomachos Crown: Towards a Resolution', *BS* 19 (2009), pp.183-93.

Delbrück, R. *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin & Leipzig, 1929).

Delbrück, R. *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantius Magnus bis zum Ende de Westreichs* (Berlin, 1933).

Deliyannis, D. M. *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (New York, NY, 2010).

Dendrinos, C. 'Manuel II Palaeologos in Paris (1400-1402): Theology, Diplomacy and Politics', in M. Hinterberger & C. Schabel (eds.), *Greeks, Latins and Intellectual History, 1204-1500* (Leuven, 2011), pp.397-422.

Diehl, C. *Théodora, impératrice de Byzance* (Paris, 1904).

Diehl, C. *Figures byzantines* (Paris, 1906).

Dietz, M. *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800* (University Park, PA, 2005).

Dimitropoulou, V. 'Imperial Women Founders and Refounders in Komnenian Constantinople', in M. Mullett (ed.), *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast, 2007), pp.87-106.

Dimitropoulou, V. 'Giving Gifts to God: Aspects of Patronage in Byzantine Art', in L. James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium* (Chichester, 2010), pp.161-70.

DOC I Bellinger, A. R. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol I: Anastasius I to Maurice (491-602)* (Washington D.C., 1966).

DOC II.I Grierson, P. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol II, Part I: Phocas and Heraclius (602-641)* (Washington D.C., 1968).

DOC III.I Grierson, P. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol III, Part I: Leo III to Michael III (717-867)* (Washington D.C., 1973).

DOC III.II Grierson, P. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol III, Part II: Basil I to Nicephorus III (867-1081)* (Washington D.C., 1973).

DOC IV.I Hendy, M. F. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol IV, Part I: Alexius I to Alexius V (1081-1204)* (Washington D.C., 1999).

DOC IV.II Hendy, M. F. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol IV, Part II: The Emperors of Nicaea and their Contemporaries (1204-1261)* (Washington D.C., 1999).

DOC V.I Grierson, P. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol V: Michael III to Constantine XI (1258-1453), Part I: Introduction, Appendices, and Bibliography* (Washington D.C., 1999).

DOC V.II Grierson, P. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection, Vol V: Michael III to Constantine XI (1258-1453), Part II: Catalogue, Concordances, and Indexes* (Washington D.C., 1999).

Dodwell, C. R. *The Pictorial Arts of the West, 800-1200* (London & New Haven, CT, 1993).

DOS I Nesbitt, J. & Oikonomidès, N. (eds.), *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, Volume I: Italy, North of the Balkans, North of the Black Sea* (Washington D.C., 1991).

DOS VI Nesbitt, J. (ed.), *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, Volume VI: Emperors, Patriarchs of Constantinople, Addenda* (Washington D.C., 2009).

Drake, A. H. 'Eusebius on the True Cross', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985), pp.1-22.

Drakopoulou, E. 'Kastoria: Art, Patronage, and Society', in J. Albani & E. Chalkia (eds.), *Heaven and Earth. Cities and Countryside in Byzantine Greece* (Athens, 2013), pp.114-25.

Drijvers, J. W. *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding the True Cross* (Leiden, 1992).

Drijvers, J. W. *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City* (Leiden & Boston, MA, 2004).

Drijvers, J. W. 'Helena Augusta, the Cross and the Myth: Some New Reflections', *Millennium: Yearbook on the Culture and History of the First Millennium C.E.* 8 (2011), pp.125-174.

Drijvers, J. W. 'Helena Augusta and the City of Rome', in M. Verhoeven, L. Bosman & H. van Asperen (eds.), *Monuments & Memory: Christian Cult Buildings and Constructions of the Past. Essays in Honour of Sible de Blaauw* (Turnhout, 2016), pp.147-53.

Dunn, A. 'The *Kommerkiarios*, the *Apotheke*, the *Dromos*, the *Vardarios*, and the West', *BMGS* 17 (1993), pp.3-24.

Durand, J. (ed.), *Byzance: l'art byzantine dans les collections publiques françaises: Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1992).

Durliat, J. *Les dedicaces d'ouvrages de défense dans l'Afrique byzantine* (Rome, 1981).

Dutton, P. E. *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln & London, 1994).

Eastmond, A. *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium: Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond* (Aldershot & Burlington, VT, 2004).

Elkins, N. 'Coins, Contexts and an Iconographic Approach', in H. M. von Kaenel & F. Kemmers (eds.), *Coins in Context I. New Perspectives for the Interpretation of Coin Finds* (Mainz, 2009), pp.25-46.

Elsner, J. 'Perspectives in Art', in N. Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (New York, NY, 2006), pp.255-77.

Emmanuel, M. 'Hairstyles and Headdresses of Empresses, Princesses and Ladies of the Aristocracy in Byzantium', *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias* 12 (1994), pp.113-20.

von Euw, A. *et al* (eds.), *Kunst im Zeitalter der Kaiserin Theophanu: Akten des Internationalen Colloquiums verstaltet vom Schnütgen-Museum* (Cologne, 1993).

von Euw, A. & Schreiner, P. (eds.), *Kaiserin Theophanu: Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends* (Cologne, 1991).

Evans, H. C. 'Imperial Aspirations: Armenian Cilicia and Byzantium in the Thirteenth Century', in A. Eastmond (ed.), *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Warwick, March 1999*, SPBS 9 (Aldershot, 2001), pp.243-58.

Evans, H. C., Hallman, R. & Holcomb, M. 'The Arts of Byzantium', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 58.4 (2001), pp.113-20.

Evans, J. A. *The Empress Theodora: Partner of Justinian* (Austin, TX, 2003).

Fant, B. M. & Lefkowitz, M. R. *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook in Translation* (Bristol, 2005).

Feissel, D. 'Les édifices de Justinien au témoignage de Procope et de l'épigraphie', *Antiquité Tardive* 8 (2000), pp.1-104.

Fejfer, J. *Roman Portraits in Context* (Berlin, 2008).

Felle, A. 'Hagia Eirene in Constantinople', prepared by I. Toth & A. Rhoby, *Materials for the Study of Late Antique and Medieval Greek and Latin Inscriptions in Istanbul: A Revised and Expanded Booklet* (Oxford & Vienna, 2020), pp.29-38.

Ferber, J. 'Theophanes' Account of the Reign of Heraclius', in E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys & A. Moffatt (eds.), *Byzantine Papers: Proceedings of the First Australian Byzantine Studies Conference, Canberra, 17-19 May, 1978* (Canberra, 1981; repr. Leiden, 2017), pp.32-42.

Fingarova, G. 'Die Stifterin *par excellence*: Zur Deutung des Stifterbildes in der Marienkirche von Apollonia, Albanien', in Theis, L., Mullett, M. & Grünbart, M.

with Fingarova, G. & Savage, M. (eds.), *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond* (Vienna, 2011-2), pp.283-98.

Fisher, E. A. 'Theodora and Antonina in the *Historia Arcana*: History and/or Fiction?', *Arethusa* 11.1 (1978), pp.253-79.

Forsythe, G. H. 'The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Church and Fortress of Justinian', *DOP* 22 (1968), pp.1-19.

Foss, C. *Ephesus After Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1979).

Foss, C. 'Theodora and Evita: Two Women in Power', in T. Sarolta & C. Sode (eds.), *Novum Millennium: Studies in Byzantine History and Culture Presented to Paul Speck* (Aldershot, 2001), pp.113-22.

Foss, C. 'The Empress Theodora', *Byz* 72 (2002), pp.141-76.

Franses, R. *Donor Portraits in Byzantine Art: The Vicissitudes of Contact between Human and Divine* (Cambridge, 2018).

Frazer, M. E. 'Byzantine Enamels and Goldsmith Work', in D. Buckton, with C. Entwistle & R. Prior (eds.), *The Treasury of San Marco* (Milan, 1984), p.109-206.

Frolow, A. 'La Vraie Croix et les expeditions d'Héraclius en Perse', *REB* 11 (1953), pp.88-93.

Frolow, A. 'L'origine des miniatures du Menologe du Vatican', *ZRVI* VI (1960), pp.29-42.

Galatariotou, C. 'Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender', *BMGS* 9.1 (1985), pp.55-94.

Gargova, F. 'The Meteora Icon of the Incredulity of Thomas Reconsidered', in L. Theis, M. Mullett, & M. Grünbart, with G. Fingarova & M. Savage (eds.), *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond* (Vienna, 2011-2), pp.369-82.

Garland, L. *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* (London & New York, NY, 1999).

Garland, L. (ed.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experiences, 800-1200* (Aldershot, 2006).

Gehn, U. & Ward-Perkins, B. 'Constantinople', in R. R. R. Smith & B. Ward-Perkins (eds.), *The Last Statues of Antiquity* (Oxford, 2016), pp.136-44.

George, W. S. *The Church of Saint Eirene at Constantinople* (London, 1912).

Georgiou, A. *The Cult of Flavia Iulia Helena in Byzantium* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2013).

Georgiou, A. 'Helena: The Subversive Persona of an Ideal Christian Empress in Early Byzantium', *JECS* 21.4 (2013), pp.597-624.

Gerstel, S. E. J. 'Saint Eudokia and the Imperial Household of Leo VI', *ArtBull*, 79.4 (1997), pp.699-707.

Gibbon, E. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol IV* (London, 1788).

Gouma-Peterson, T. (ed.), *Anna Komnene and her Times* (London & New York, NY, 2000).

Grabar, A. *L'empereur dans l'art byzantine* (Paris, 1936).

Grabar, A. *L'Iconoclasme byzantin: Le dossier archéologique* (Paris, 1957).

Grabar, A. 'Une pyxide en ivoire à Dumbarton Oaks: Quelques notes sur l'art profane pendant les derniers siècles de l'Empire byzantin', *DOP* 14 (1960), pp.121-46.

Grabar, A. 'Opere bizantine', in H. R. Hahnloser, *et al* (eds.), *Il Tesoro e il Museo* (Florence, 1971).

Grierson, P. *Byzantine Coinage* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA, 1982).

Guillou, A. 'Deux ivoires, Constantinopolitains dates du IXe et Xe siècle', in S. Dufrenne (ed.), *Byzance et les slaves. Études de civilisation: Mélanges Ivan Dujčev* (Paris, 1979), pp.209-11.

Harries, J. *Imperial Rome, AD 284 to 363: The New Empire* (Edinburgh, 2012).

Harries, J. 'Men without Women: Theodosius' Consistory and the Business of Government', in C. Kelly (ed.), *Theodosius II: Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2013), pp.67-89.

Harries, J. 'The Empresses' Tale, AD 300-360', in C. Harrison, C. Humfress & I. Sandwell (eds.), *Being Christian in Late Antiquity: A Festschrift for Gillian Clark* (Cambridge, 2014), pp.197-214.

Hayden, R. 'Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites in South Asia and the Balkans', *Current Anthropology* 43.2 (2002), pp.205-31.

Hennessy, C. 'A Child Bride and Her Representation in the Vatican Epithalamion, cod. Gr. 1851', *BMGS* 30.2 (2006), pp.115-50.

Hennessy, C. 'The Byzantine Child: Picturing Complex Family Dynamics', in L. Brubaker & S. Tougher (eds.), *Approaches to the Byzantine Family* (Farnham, 2013), pp.207-31.

Herrin, J. 'In Search of Byzantine Women: Three Avenues of Approach', in Av. Cameron & A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Images of Women in Antiquity* (London, 1983), pp.167-90.

Herrin, J. 'Theophano: Considerations on the Education of a Byzantine Princess', in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.64-85.

Herrin, J. 'The Imperial Feminine in Byzantium', *Past and Present* 169 (2000), pp.3-35.

Herrin, J. *Women in Purple: Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* (London, 2001).

Herrin, J. 'Marriage: A Fundamental Element of Imperial Statecraft', in J. Herrin (ed.), *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ, 2013), pp.302-20.

Hill, B. *Imperial Women in Byzantium, 1025-1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology* (Harlow, 1999).

Hilsdale, C. J. 'Constructing a Byzantine *augusta*: A Greek Book for a French Bride', *ArtBull* 87.3 (2005), pp.456-83.

Hilsdale, C. J. *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge, 2014).

Holum K. & Vikan, G. 'The Trier Ivory, Adventus Ceremonial and the Relics of St. Stephen', *DOP* 33 (1979), pp.113-33.

Holum, K. *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkley, CA, 1982).

Holum, K. 'Hadrian and St Helena: Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Holy Land Pilgrimage', in R. Ousterhout (ed.), *The Blessings of Pilgrimage* (Urbana, IL, 1990), pp.66-81.

Hunt, E. D. *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire, AD 312-460* (Oxford, 1982).

Jacobs, I. 'Cross Graffiti as Physical Means to Christianize the Classical City: An Exploration of their Function, Meaning, Topographical, and Socio-Historical Contexts', in I. Garipzanov, C. Goodson & H. Maguire (eds.), *Graphic Signs of Identity, Faith, and Power in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2017), pp.175-222.

James, L. 'Goddess, Whore, Wife or Slave? Will the Real Byzantine Empress Please Stand Up?', in A. Duggan (ed.), *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp.123-40.

James, L. *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London, 2001).

James, L. 'The Empress and the Virgin in Early Byzantium: Piety, Authority and Devotion', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005, repr. Abingdon, 2017), pp.145-52.

James, L. 'Introduction: Art and Text in Byzantium', in L. James (ed.), *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 1-12.

James, L. 'Men, Women, Eunuchs: Gender, Sex, and Power', in J. Haldon (ed.), *A Social History of Byzantium* (Oxford, 2009), pp.31-50.

James, L. 'Ghosts in the Machine: The Lives and Deaths of Constantinian Imperial Women', in B. Neil & L. Garland (eds.), *Questions of Gender in Byzantine Society* (Farnham, 2013), pp.93-112.

James, L. 'Displaying Identity and Power? The Coins of Byzantine Empress between 804-1204', in S. Solway (ed.), *Medieval Coins and Seals: Constructing Identity, Signifying Power* (Turnhout, 2015), pp.189-210.

James, L. 'Made in Byzantium? Mosaics after 1204', in A. Lymberopoulou (ed.), *Cross-Cultural Interaction between Byzantium and the West, 1204-1669: Whose Mediterranean Is it Anyway?* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2018), pp.258-71.

Janin, R. *Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et répertoire topographique* (Paris, 1964).

Janin, R. *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin, première partie: Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique, 3, Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1969, 2nd ed.).

Jeffreys, E. M. 'The Comnenian Background to the *romans d'antiquité', Byz* 50 (1980), pp.455-86.

Jeffreys, E. M. 'The *Sevastokratorissa* Eirene as Literary Patroness: The Monk Iakovos', *JÖB* 32.3 (1982), pp.63-71.

Jeffreys, M. 'Piroska and the Komnenian Dynasty', in M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), pp.97-119.

Jenkins, R. J. H. *Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries, AD 610-1071* (London, 1966; repr. Toronto, 2001).

Jestice, P. G. *Imperial Ladies of the Ottonian Dynasty: Women and Rule in Tenth-Century Germany* (New York, NY, 2018).

Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, I. 'Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory', *DOP* 31 (1977), pp.305-25.

Kalavrezou, I. 'A New Type of Icon: Ivories and Steatites', in A. Markopoulos (ed.), *Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and His Age: Second International Byzantine Conference, Delphi, July 22-26, 1987* (Athens, 1989), pp.377-96.

Kalavrezou, I. 'Irregular Marriages in the Eleventh Century and the Zoe and Constantine Mosaic in Hagia Sophia', in A. E. Laiou & D. Simon (eds.), *Law and Society in Byzantium, 9th-12th Centuries* (Washington D.C., 1994), pp.241-60.

Kalavrezou, I. (ed.), *Byzantine Women and their World* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).

Kaldellis, A. 'The Study of Women and Children: Methodological Challenges and New Directions', in P. Stephenson (ed.), *The Byzantine World* (London, 2010), pp.61-71.

Kaldellis, A. *Ethnography after Antiquity* (Philadelphia, PA, 2013).

Kalopissi-Verti, S. 'Patronage and Artistic Production in Byzantium during the Palaiologan Period', in S. T. Brooks (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557): Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture* (New York, NY, 2006), pp.76-97.

Kantorowicz, E. H. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theory* (Princeton, NJ, 1957).

Kantorowicz, E. H. 'On the Golden Marriage Belt and the Marriage Rings of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection', *DOP* 14 (1960), pp.1-16.

Karlin-Hayter, P. 'L'enjeu d'une rumeur. Opinion et imaginaire à Byzance au IXe siècle', *JÖB* 41 (1994), pp.85-111.

Kazhdan, A. "Constantin imaginaire': Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great', *Byz* 57 (1987), pp.196-250.

Kazhdan, A. 'The Formation of Byzantine Family Names in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *Byz* 43.1 (1997), pp.90-109.

Kiss, E. 'The State of Research on the Monomachos Crown and Some Further Thoughts', in O. Z. Pevny (ed.), *Perceptions of Byzantium and Its Neighbors (843-1261)* (New York, NY, 2000), pp.60-83.

Kleiner, D. E. E. *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven, CT, 1992).

Kleiner, D. E. E. & Matheson, S. B. (eds.), *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, CT, 1996).

Kleiner, D. E. E. 'Imperial Women as Patrons of the Arts in the Early Empire', in D. E. E. Kleiner & S. B. Matheson (eds.), *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, CT, 1996), pp.28-41.

Kleiner, D. E. E. 'Sestertius of Mark Antony and Octavia with Quadriga of Hippocamps', in D. E. E. Kleiner & S. B. Matheson (eds.), *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, CT, 1996), pp.56-7.

Koder, J. & Trapp, E. 'Bericht über eine Reise nach Albanien', *JÖB* 15 (1966), pp.391-4.

Kotsis, K. 'Defining Female Authority in Eighth-Century Byzantium: The Numismatic Images of Empress Irene (797-802)', *JLA* 5.1 (2012), pp.185-215.

Kotsis, K. 'Mothers of the Empire: Empresses Zoe and Theodora on a Byzantine Medallion Cycle', *Medieval Feminist Forum* 48.1 (2012), pp.5-96.

Krautheimer, R. *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (New York, NY, 1965, rev. & repr. R. Krautheimer & S. Ćurčić, 1986).

Lafontaine-Dosogne, J. 'The Art of Byzantium and its Relation to Germany in the Time of the Empress Theophano', in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.211-30.

Laiou, A. 'The Role of Women in Byzantine Society', *JÖB* 31.1 (1981), pp.233-60.

Lau, M. 'Piroska-Eirene, First Western Empress of Byzantium: Power and Perception', in M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), pp.143-51.

Lane Fox, R. 'The Life of Daniel', in M. J. Edwards & S. Swain (eds.), *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1997), pp.175-226.

Lapatin, K. 'Luxury Arts', in B. E. Borg (ed.), *A Companion to Roman Art* (Chichester, 2015), pp.321-43.

Lascaratos, J. & Tsiamis, C. 'Two Cases of Smallpox in Byzantium', *International Journal of Dermatology* 41.11 (2002), pp.792-5.

Leadbetter, B. 'The Illegitimacy of Constantine and the Birth of the Tetrarchy', in S. N. C. Lieu & D. Montserrat (eds.), *Constantine: History, Historiography and Legend* (London & New York, NY, 1998), pp.74-85.

Lenski, N. 'Empresses in the Holy Land: The Creation of a Christian Utopia in Late Antique Palestine', in L. Ellis & F. L. Kidner (eds.), *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity: Sacred and Profane* (Aldershot, 2004), pp.113-24.

Leyser, K. *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Carolingian and Ottonain Centuries* (London, 1994).

Lidova, M. 'The Imperial Theotokos: Revealing the Concept of Early Christian Imagery in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome', *Convivium* 2.2 (2015), pp.60-81.

Ling, R. 'Mosaics', in B. E. Borg (ed.), *A Companion to Roman Art* (Chichester, 2015), pp.268-85.

Lorenz, K. 'Wall Painting', in B. E. Borg (ed.), *A Companion to Roman Art* (Chichester, 2015), pp.252-67.

Lowden, J. 'Manuscript Illumination in Byzantium, 1261-1557', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.259-93.

Lowden J. & Nelson, R. S. 'The Palaeologina Group: Additional Manuscripts and New Questions', *DOP* 45 (1991), pp.59-68.

Lymberopoulou, A. (ed.), *Cross-Cultural Interaction between Byzantium and the West, 1204-1669: Whose Mediterranean Is it Anyway?* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2018).

MacCormack, S. *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, LA, 1981).

Machado, C. with Lenaghan, J. 'Rome', in R. R. R. Smith & B. Ward-Perkins (eds.), *The Last Statues of Antiquity* (Oxford, 2016), pp.121-35.

MacLean, S. *Ottonian Queenship* (Oxford, 2017).

Macrides, R. J. 'Dynastic Marriages and Spiritual Kinship', in J. Shepard & S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers form the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, SPBS 1 (Aldershot, 1994), pp.380-410.

Macrides, R. J. & Magdalino, P. 'The Architecture of ekphrasis: Construction and Context of Paul the Silentiary's Poem on Hagia Sophia', *BMGS* 12 (1988), pp.47-82.

Macridy, T. 'The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi', *DOP* 18 (1964), pp.253-77.

Madden, F. W., Roach Smith, C. & Stevenson, S. W. *A Dictionary of Roman Coins: Republican and Imperial* (London, 1889).

Magdalino, P. 'Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I', *JÖB* 37 (1987), pp.51-64.

Magdalino, P. 'Renaissances d'une capitale: l'urbanisme constantinopolitain des dynasties impériales', *TM* 22 (2018), pp.1-24.

Maguire, H. *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ, 1981).

Maguire, H. 'The Art of Comparing in Byzantium', *ArtBull* 70.1 (1988), pp.89-93.

Maguire, H. 'The Cycle of Images in the Church', in L. Safran (ed.), *Heaven and Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 1998), pp.121-51.

Maguire, H. 'Images of the Court', in H. C. Evans & W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York, NY, 1997), pp.182-191.

Malloy, A. G., Preston, I. F., & Seltman, A. J. *Coins of the Crusader States, 1098-1291* (Fairfield, CT, 2004, 2nd ed).

Mango, C. *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen, 1959).

Mango, C. 'The Church of Saint Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople and the Alleged Tradition of Octagonal Palatine Churches', *JÖB* 21 (1972), pp.189-93.

Mango, C. 'Ancient Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder', *DOP* 17 (1963), pp.53-75.

Mango, C. *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 1986, repr. 2009).

Mango, C. 'Eudocia Ingerina, the Normans, and the Macedonian Dynasty', *ZRVI* XIV-XV (1973), pp.17-27.

Mango, C. 'The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine at Constantinople', in N. Cambi & E. Marin (eds.), *Radovi XIII Medunarodnog Kongressa za Starokršćansku Arheologiju II. Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae II: Split-Poreč. 25.9.-I. 10.1994. Vol 2* (Rome & Split, 1998), pp.61-76.

Mango, C. 'Theotokopolis', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan, 2000), pp.17-25.

Marava-Chatzinicolaou, A. & Toufexi-Paschou, C. *Catalogue of the Illuminated Byzantine Manuscripts of the National Library of Hreece, Vol. 2: Manuscripts of New Testament Texts, 13th-15th Century* (Athens, 1985).

Mathews, T. F. *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park, PA, 1971).

Mathews, T. F. 'Religious Organisation', in H. C. Evans & W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York, NY, 1997), pp.21-81.

Mavroudi, M. 'Licit and Illicit Divination', in V. Dasen & J.-M. Spieser (eds.), *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* (Florence, 2014), pp.431-60.

Maxwell, K. 'Another Lectionary of the 'Atelier' of the Palaiologina, Vat. Gr. 352', *DOP* 37 (1983), pp.47-54.

Mayr-Harting, H. 'Liudprand of Cremona's Account of His Legation to Constantinople (968) and Ottonian Imperial Strategy', *EHR* 116 (2001), pp.539-56.

McClanan, A. *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses: Image and Empire* (Basingstoke & New York, NY, 2002).

McClanan, A. 'Ritual and Representation of the Byzantine Empress' Court at San Vitale, Ravenna', in N. Cambi & E. Marin (eds.), *Radovi XIII Medunarodnog Kongressa za Starokršćansku Arheologiju II. Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae II: Split-Poreč. 25.9.-I. 10.1994. Vol 2* (Rome & Split, 1998), pp.11-20.

McCormick, M. *Eternal Glory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986).

McEvoy, M. E. *Child Emperor Rule in the Late Roman West* (Oxford, 2013).

McKitterick, R. 'Ottonian Intellectual Culture in the Tenth Century', in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.169-93.

Melichar, P. *Empresses of Late Byzantium: Foreign Brides, Mediators and Pious Women* (Berlin, 2019).

Meyer, M. *An Obscure Portrait: Imaging Women's Reality in Byzantine Art* (London, 2009).

Mielke, C. 'The Many Faces of Piroska-Eirene of Hungary in Visual and Material Culture', in M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), pp.153-72.

Missiou, D. 'Über die institutionelle Rolle der byzantinischen Kaiserin', *JÖB* 32.2 (1982), pp.489-98.

Mouriki, D. *The Mosaics of Nea Mone on Chios* (Athens, 1985).

Müller-Wiener, W. *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls* (Tübingen, 1977).

Mullett, M. 'Byzantium: A Friendly Society?', *Past and Present* 118 (1988), pp.3-24.

Mullett, M. 'Writing in Early Mediaeval Byzantium', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.156-85.

Mullett, M. 'Tented Ceremony: Ephemeral Performances under the Komnenoi', in A. Beihammer, S. Constantinou & M. Parani (eds.), *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean: Comparative Perspectives* (Leiden, 2013), pp.487-513.

Munk Højte, J. *Roman Imperial Statue Bases from Augustus to Commodus* (Aarhus, 2005).

Nash, P. *Empress Adelheid and Countess Matilda: Medieval Female Rulership and the Foundations of European Society* (New York, NY, 2017).

Nathan, G. S. 'The *Vienna Dioscorides' Dedicatio* to Anicia Juliana: A Usurpation of Imperial Patronage?', in G. S. Nathan & L. Garland (eds.), Basileia*: Essays on* Imperium *and Culture, in Honour of E. M. and M. J. Jeffreys* (Brisbane, 2011), pp.95-102.

Nelson, R. S. 'Byzantium and the Rebirth of Art and Learning in Italy and France', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.515-43.

Neville, L. *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian* (New York, NY, 2016).

Neville, L. *Byzantine Gender* (Leeds, 2019).

Nicol, D. M. *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267-1479: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984).

Nicol, D. M. *The Immortal Emperor: The Life and Legend of Constantine Palaiologos, Last Emperor of the Romans* (Cambridge, 1992).

Nicol, D. M. *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453* (Cambridge, 1993).

Nicol, D. M. *The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits, 1250-1400* (Cambridge, 1994).

Nicol, D. M. *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge, 1988).

Niewöhner, P. 'Historisch-topographische Überlegungen zum Trierer Prozessionselfenbein, dem Christusbild an der Chalke, Kaiserin Irenes Triumph im Bilderstreit und der Euphemiakirche am Hippodrom', *Millennium: Yearbook on the Culture and History of the First Millennium C.E.* 11 (2014), pp.261-88.

Nikolaou, K. 'Empresses and *Augustae* as Wives, Paramours and Mistresses (5th-11th centuries)', *BSl* 75 (2017), pp.43-54.

Oikonomidès, N. 'John VII Palaeologus and the Ivory Pyxis at Dumbarton Oaks', *DOP* 13 (1977), pp.329-37.

Oikonomidès, N. *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Washington D.C., 1985).

Oikonomidès, N. 'The Contents of the Byzantine House from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century', *DOP* 44 (1990), pp.205-14.

Oikonomidès, N. 'La couronne dite de Constantin Monomaque', *TM* 12 (1994), pp.241-62.

Olovsdotter, C. *The Consular Image: An Iconographical Study of the Consular Diptychs* (Oxford, 2005).

L'Orange, H. P. *Das spätantike Herrscherbild von Diokletian bis zu dem Konstantin-Söhnen 284-361 n. Chr.* (Berlin, 1984).

Ousterhout, R. 'Secular Architecture', in H. C. Evans & W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York, NY, 1997), pp.192-216.

Ousterhout, R. *The Art of the Kariye Camii* (London, 2002).

Ousterhout, R. 'Architecture and Patronage in the Age of John II', in A. Bucossi & A. Rodriguez Suarez (eds.), *John II Komnenos, Emperor of Byzantium: In the Shadow of the Father and the Son* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2016), pp.135-54.

Ousterhout, R. 'Piroska and the Pantokrator: Reassesing the Architectural Evidence', in M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), pp.225-59.

Papaioannou, S. 'Anna Komnene's Will', in D. Sullivan, E. A. Fisher & S. Papaioannou (eds.), *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honour of Alice-Mary Talbot* (Leiden, 2011), pp.99-121.

Parani, M. 'The Romanos Ivory and the New Tokali Kilise: Imperial Costume as a Tool for Dating Byzantine Art', *Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l'antiquité et moyen-âge* 49 (2001), pp.15-28.

Parani, M. *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography, 11th-15th centuries* (Leiden, 2003).

Patterson-Ševčenko, N. 'The Representation of Donors and Holy Figures on Four Byzantine Icons', *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias* 17 (1994), pp.157-64.

Penna, V. 'The Mother of God on Coins and Lead Seals', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens & Milan, 2000), pp.209-17.

Peter Cowe, S. 'The Georgians', in H. C. Evans & W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York, NY, 1997), pp.336-48.

Pohlsander, H. A. 'Constantia', *Ancient Society* 25 (1994), pp.151-67.

Pohlsander, H. A. *The Emperor Constantine* (London & New York, NY, 1996).

Pomeroy, S. *Goddess, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (London, 1975).

Restle, M. 'Höfische Kunst in Konstantinopel in der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit', in R. Lauer & H. G. Majer (eds.), *Höfische Kultur in Südosteuropa: Bericht der Kolloquien der Südosteuropa–Kommission 1988 bis 1990* (Göttingen, 1994), pp.26-31.

RIC III Mattingly, H. & Sydenham, E. A. *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol III: Antoninus Pius to Commodus* (London, 1930).

RIC IV.I Mattingly, H. & Sydenham, E. A. *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol IV, Part I: Pertinax to Geta* (London, 1962).

RIC V.I Webb, P. H. *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol V, Part I: Valerian to Florian* (London, 1962).

RIC V.II Webb, P. H. *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol V, Part II: Probus to Amandus* (London, 1962).

RIC VI Sutherland, C. H. V. *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol. VI: The Diocletian Reform – Maximinus II, AD 294-313* (London, 1967).

RIC VII Bruun, P. M. *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol. VII: Constantine – Licinius, AD 313-337* (London, 1966).

RIC VIII Kent, J. P. C. *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol VIII: The Family of Constantine I, AD 337-364* (London, 1981).

RIC IX Pearce, J. W. E. *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol IX: Valentinian I – Theodosius I, AD 364-395* (London, 1968).

RIC X Kent, J. P. C. *Roman Imperial Coinage, Vol X: The Divided Empire and the Fall of the Western Parts, AD 395-491* (London, 1994).

Riehle, A. 'Authorship and Gender (and) Identity. Women's Writing in the Middle Byzantine Period', in A. Pizzone (ed.), *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities* (Berlin, 2014), pp.245-62.

Robertson, A. S. *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet, University of Glasgow, Vol I: Augustus to Nerva* (London, 1962).

Rodley, L. 'The Byzantine Context', in R. Druits & A. Lymberopoulou (eds.), *Byzantine Art and Renaissance Europe* (Farnham, 2013), pp.9-35.

Rohr, Z. E. & Benz, L. (eds.), *Queenship and the Women of Westeros: Female Agency and Advice in Game of Thrones and A Song of Ice and Fire* (New York, NY, 2020).

Rose, M. E. 'The Trier Ceiling: Power and Status on Display in Late Antiquity', *GR* 53.1 (2006), pp.93-109.

Rubery, E. 'The Vienna 'Empress' Ivory and its Companion in Florence: Crowned in Different Glories?', in A. Eastmond & L. James (eds.), *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2013), pp.99-114.

Runciman, S. 'The Empress Eirene the Athenian', in D. Baker (ed.), *Medieval Women*: *Dedicated and Presented to Professor Rosalind M. T. Hill on the Occasion of her Seventieth Birthday* (Oxford, 1978), pp.101-18.

Rousseau, V. 'Emblem of an Empire: The Development of the Byzantine Empress's Crown', *Al-Masāq* 16 (2004), pp.5-14.

Rydén, L. 'The Bride-Shows at the Byzantine Court: History or Fiction?', *Eranos: Acta Philologica Suecana* 83 (1985), pp.175-191.

Sághy, M & Ousterhout, R. (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019).

Salway, B. 'What's in a Name? A Survey of Roman Onomastic Practice from c. 700 BC to AD 700', *JRS* 84 (1994), pp.124-45.

Schlief, C. 'Men on the Right, Women on the Left: (A)Symmetrical Spaces and Gendered Places', in V. C. Raguin & S. Stanbury (eds.), *Women's Space: Patronage, Place and Gender in the Medieval Church* (New York, NY, 2006), pp.207-49.

Schramm, P. E. *Die deutschen Kaiser und Könige in Bildern ihrer Zeit* (Munich, 1983).

Scott, J. 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *AHR* 91.5 (1986), pp.1053-75.

Scott, J. 'Gender: Still A Useful Category of Analysis?', *Diogenes* 225.7 (2010), pp.7-14.

Settipani, C. *Continuités des élites à Byzance durant les siècles obscurs. Les princes caucasiens et l'Empire du VIe au IXe siècle* (Paris, 2006).

Ševčenko, I. 'The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II', *DOP* 16 (1962), pp.245-76.

Ševčenko, I. 'The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery in the Light of Its Inscriptions', *DOP* 20 (1966), pp.255-64.

Shawcross, T. & Toth, I. (eds.), *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond* (Cambridge, 2018).

Shepard, J. 'Marriages towards the Millennium', in P. Magdalino (ed.), *Byzantium in the Year 1000* (Leiden, 2003), pp.1-33.

Shlyakhtin, R. "A New Mixture of Two Powers': Nicholas Kallikles and Theodore Prodromos on Empress Eirene', in M. Sághy & R. Ousterhout (eds.), *Piroska and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople* (Budapest & New York, NY, 2019), pp.291-300.

Simon, E. *Die konstantinischen Deckengemalde in Trier* (Mainz, 1986).

Smith, R. R. R. & Ward-Perkins, B. (eds.), *The Last Statues of Antiquity* (Oxford, 2016).

Spain, S. 'The Translation of Relics Ivory, Trier', *DOP* 33 (1977), pp.13-5.

Spain Alexander, S. 'Heraclius, Byzantine Imperial Ideology, and the David Plates', *Speculum* 52.2 (1977), pp.217-37.

Spatharakis, I. *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976).

Spier, J. 'Late Antique Cameos', in M. Henig & M. Vickers (eds.), *Cameos in Context: The Benjamin Zucker Lectures* (Oxford, 1993), pp.43-56.

Stafford, P. *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1983).

Stahl, A. M. 'Coinage', in M. Schaus (ed.), *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopaedia* (New York, NY, & Abingdon, 2006), pp.154-5.

Stankovič, V. 'John II Komnenos before the Year 1118', in A. Bucossi & A. Rodriguez Suarez (eds.), *John II Komnenos, Emperor of Byzantium: In the Shadow of the Father and the Son* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2016), pp.11-21.

Stewart, P. 'The Destruction of Statues in Late Antiquity', in R. Miles (ed.), *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity* (London, 1999), pp.159-89.

Sydenham, E. A. *The Coinage of the Roman Republic* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1952).

Talbot, A.-M. 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina: Wife of Michael VIII', *DOP* 46 (1992), pp.295-303.

Talbot, A.-M. 'The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII Palaiologos', *DOP* 47 (1993), pp.243-61.

Talbot, A.-M. 'The Life of St Theodora of Arta', in A.-M. Talbot (ed.) *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Washington D.C., 1996), pp.323-33.

Talbot, A.-M. 'Revival and Decline: Voices from the Byzantine Capital', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.17-63.

Tatic-Djuric, M. 'L'archéologie byzantine au XIIe Congrès internationale des études byzantines d'Ochrid', *Byz* 31.2 (1961), pp.537-54.

Theis, L., Mullett, M. & Grünbart, M. with Fingarova, G. & Savage, M. (eds.), *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond* (Vienna, 2011-2).

Theotokis, G. 'Rus, Varangian, and Frankish Mercenaries in the Service of the Byzantine Emperors (9th-11th centuries)', *BS* 22 (2012), pp.125-56.

Treadgold, W. 'The Historicity of Imperial Bride-Shows', *JÖB* 54 (2004), pp.39-52.

Treadgold, W. 'The Unpublished Saint's Life of the Empress Irene (BHG 2205)', *ByzForsch* 8 (1982), p.237-51.

Tougher, S. *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912): Politics and People* (Leiden, 1997).

Tougher, S. 'Michael III and Basil the Macedonian: Just Good Friends?', in L. James (ed.), *Desire and Denial in Byzantium: Papers from the 31st Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Brighton, March 1997*, SPBS 6 (Aldershot, 1999), pp.149-60.

Tougher, S. *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society* (Abingdon & New York, NY, 2008).

Tsamakda, V. *The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes* (Leiden, 2002).

Unterweger, U. 'The Image of the Empress Theodora as Patron', in L. Theis, M. Mullett, & M. Grünbart, with G. Fingarova & M. Savage (eds.), *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond* (Vienna, 2011-2), pp.97-108.

Van Milligen, A. *Byzantine Constantinople: The Walls of the City and Adjoining Historical Sites* (Cambridge, 1899, repr. 2010).

Varner, E. R. *Mutilation and Transformation:* Damnatio Memoriae *and Roman Imperial Portraiture* (Leiden, 2004).

Vassilaki, M. 'Praying for the Salvation of the Empire?', in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), pp.263-74.

Vikan, G. 'Art and Marriage in Early Byzantium', *DOP* 44 (1990), pp.145-63.

Vinson, M. 'Romance and Reality in Byzantine Bride Shows', in L. Brubaker & J. M. Smith (eds.), *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900* (Cambridge, 2004), pp.102-20.

Von Simson, O. G., *Sacred Fortress* (Chicago, IL, 1948).

Vrij, M. *The Numismatic Iconography of the Period of Iconomachy (610-867)* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2016).

Wahlgren, S. *The Chronicle of the Logothete* (Liverpool, 2019).

Wainwright, L.A. 'Import, Export: The Global Impact of Byzantine Marriage Alliances during the Tenth Century', in L. Brubaker, R. Darley & D. Reynolds (eds.), *Global Byzantium. Proceedings of the Fiftieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, (Abingdon & New York, NY, forthcoming).

Wainwright, L. A. "Charity Begins at the Monastery': Female Philanthropy in the Palaiologan Period', in L. Brubaker, A. Kelley & F. Vanni (eds.), *Peasants and Poverty in Byzantium* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

de Wald, E. 'The Comnenian Portraits in the Barberini Psalter', *Hesperia* 13.1 (1944), pp.78-86.

Wander, S. H. 'The Cyprus Plates: The Story of David and Goliath', *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 8 (1973), pp.89-104.

Wander, S. H. 'The Cyprus Plates and the 'Chronicle' of Fredegar', *DOP* 29 (1975), pp.345-6.

Weitzmann, K. *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Volume 3: Ivories and Steatites* (Washington D.C., 1972).

Weitzmann, K. *The Monastery of St Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Icons, Volume I: From the Sixth to Tenth Century* (Princeton, 1976).

Weitzmann, K. (ed.), *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, NY, 1979).

Westermann-Angerhausen, H. 'Did Theophano Leave Her Mark on the Ottonian Arts?', in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.244-64.

Weyl Carr, A. 'Images: Expressions of Faith and Power', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.143-207.

Whittemore, T. *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report. Work Done in 1935-38: The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery* (Oxford, 1942).

Wightman, E. M. *Roman Trier and the Treveri* (Chicago, IL, 1970).

van Winter, J. M. 'The Education of the Daughters of the Nobility in the Ottonian Empire', in A. Davids (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.86-98.

Wixom, W. D. 'Byzantine Art and the Latin West', in H. C. Evans & W. D. Wixom (eds.), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York, NY, 1997), pp.434-509.

Wolf, G. 'Zur Datierung des Buchedeckels des Codex Aureus Epternacensis', *Hémecht* 42.2 (1990), pp.147-52.

Wortley, J. 'The Trier Ivory Reconsidered', *GRBS* 21.4 (1980), pp.381-94.

Wood, S. *Imperial Women: A Study in Public Images, 40 BC-AD 68* (Leiden, 1999).

Woods, D. 'On the Death of the Empress Fausta', *GR* 45 (1998), pp.70-86.

Woodacre, E. (ed.), *Queenship in the Mediterranean: Negotiating the Role of the Queen in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras* (New York, NY, 2013).

Woodfin, W. 'Liturgical Textiles', in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York, NY, 2004), pp.295-333.

Xyngopoulos, A. 'Νέαι προσωπογραφίαι τής Μαρίας Παλαιολογίνας καί τού Θωμά Πρελιούμποβιτς', *Deltion tes Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias* 4 (1964), pp.53-67.

Zacos, G. & Veglery, A. *Byzantine Lead Seals, Vol. 1* (Basel, 1972).

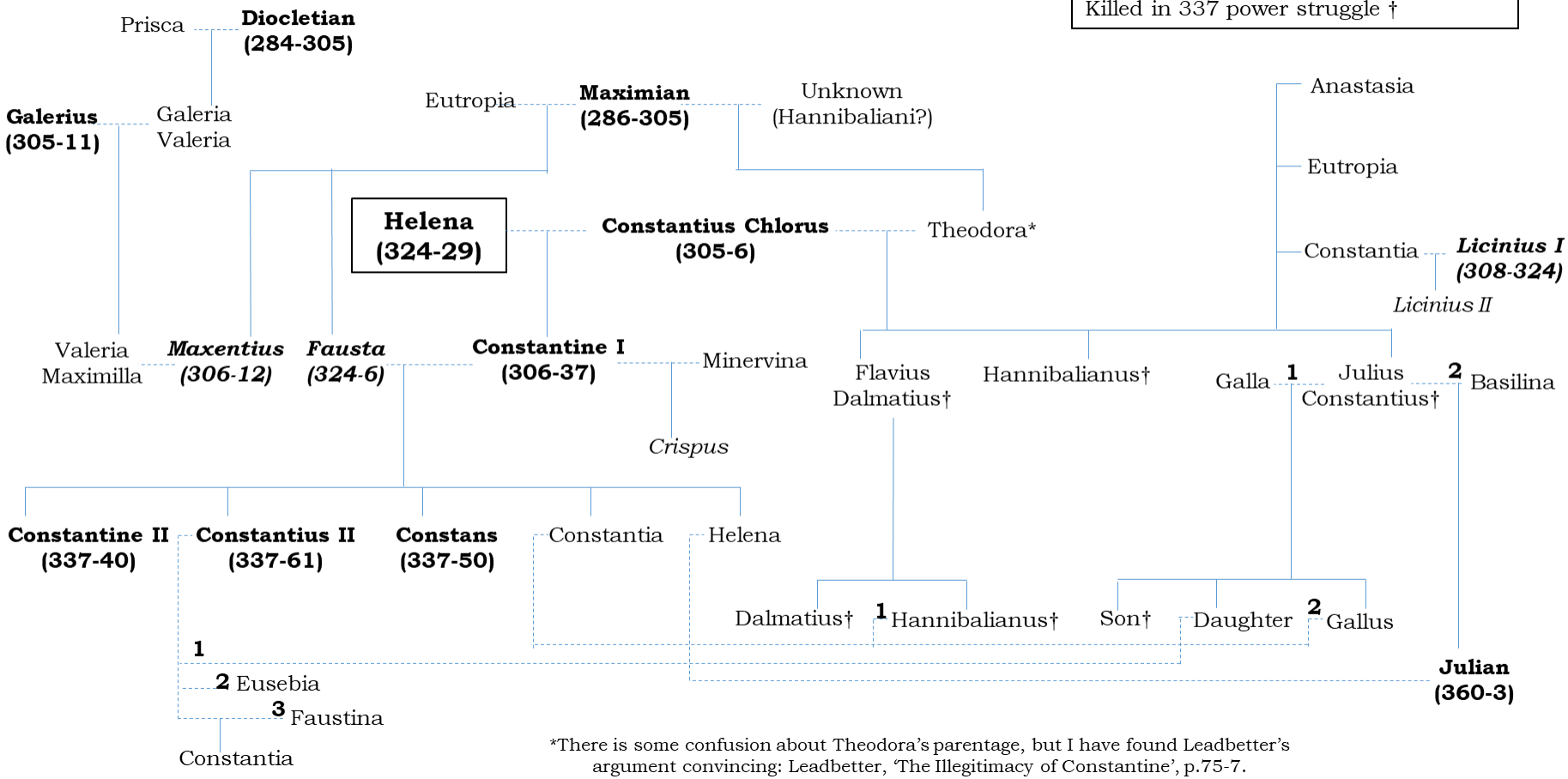
Zadoks-Josephus Jitta, A. 'Imperial Messages in Agate, II', *Bulletin van de Vereeniging tot Bevordering der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving* 41 (1966), pp.91-104.

Zuckerman, C. 'La petite Augusta et le Turc. Epiphania-Eudocie sur les monnaies d'Heraclius', *Revue Numismatique* 150 (1995), pp.113-26.

Appendix One

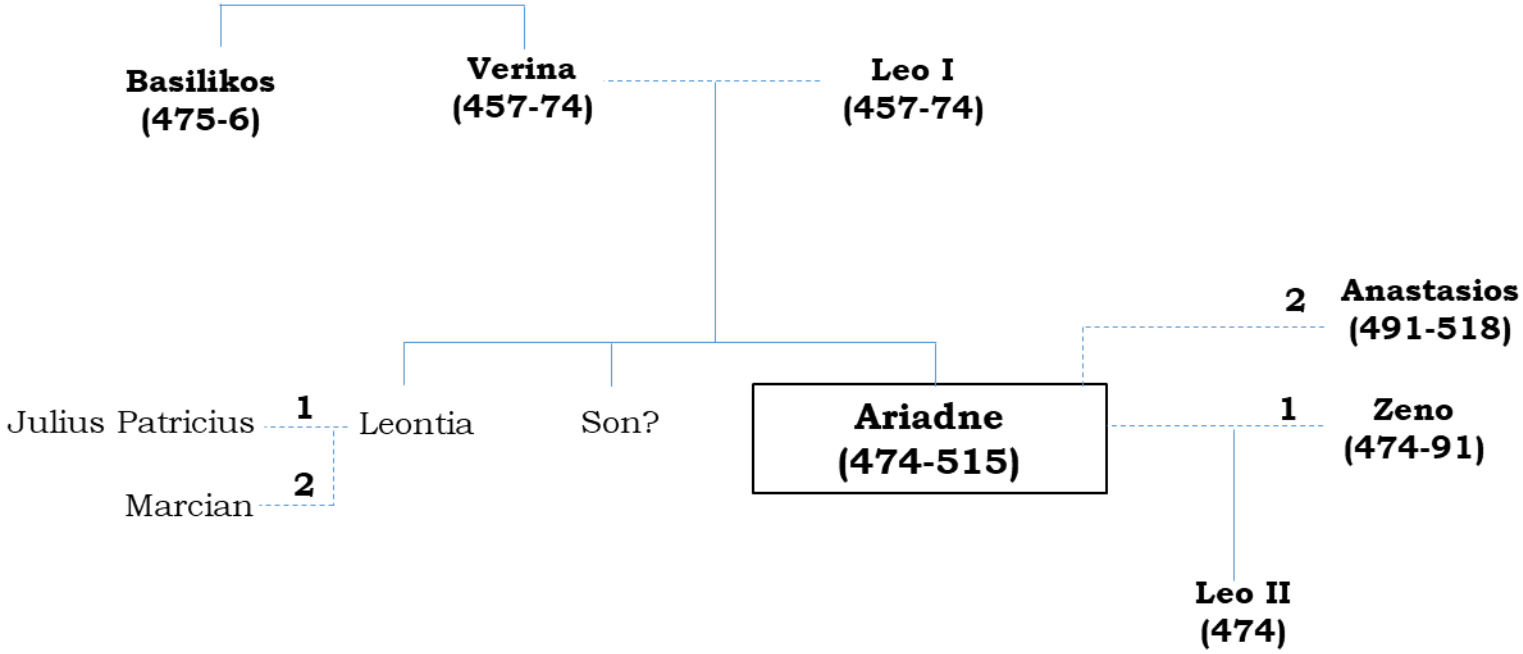
1.1: Family of Helena
Particularly in reference to the events of 337

Roman/Byzantine *augustus/augusta*
Killed by Constantine
Killed in 337 power struggle †

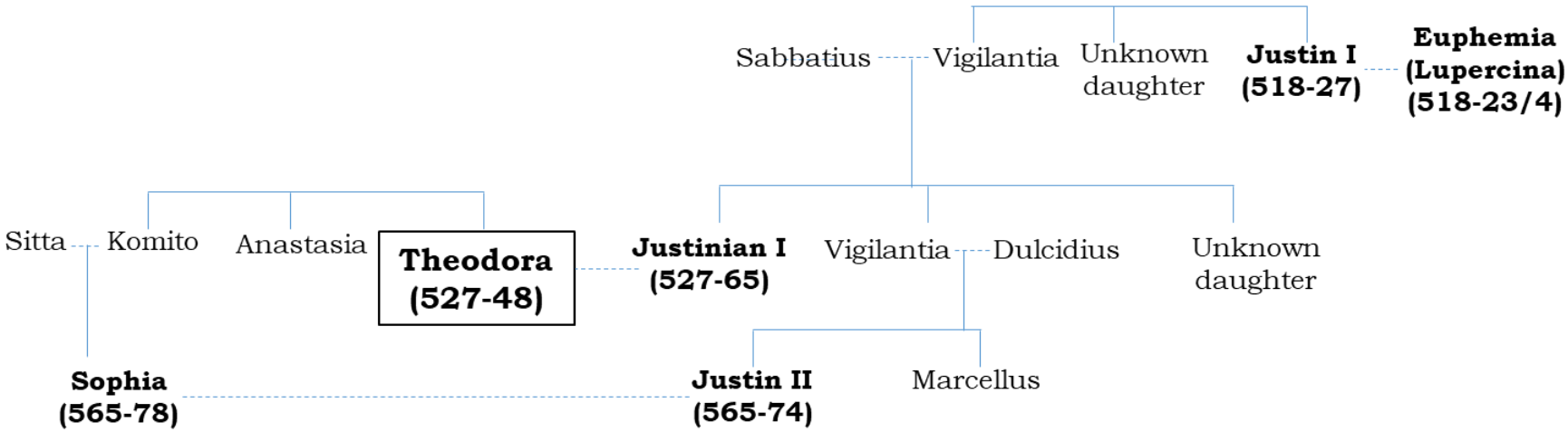


*There is some confusion about Theodora's parentage, but I have found Leadbetter's argument convincing: Leadbetter, 'The Illegitimacy of Constantine', p.75-7.

1.2: Family of Ariadne



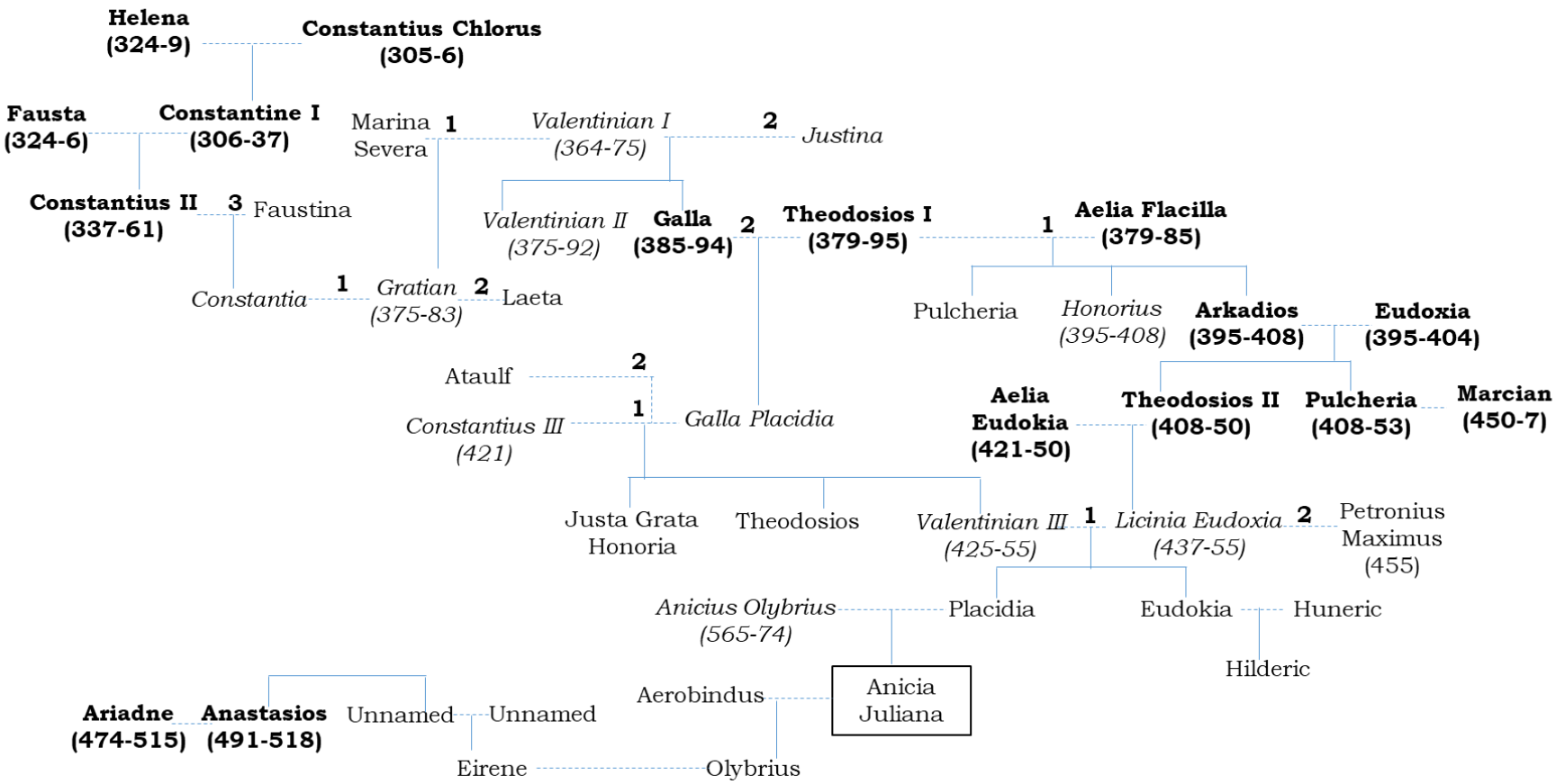
1.3a: Family of Theodora



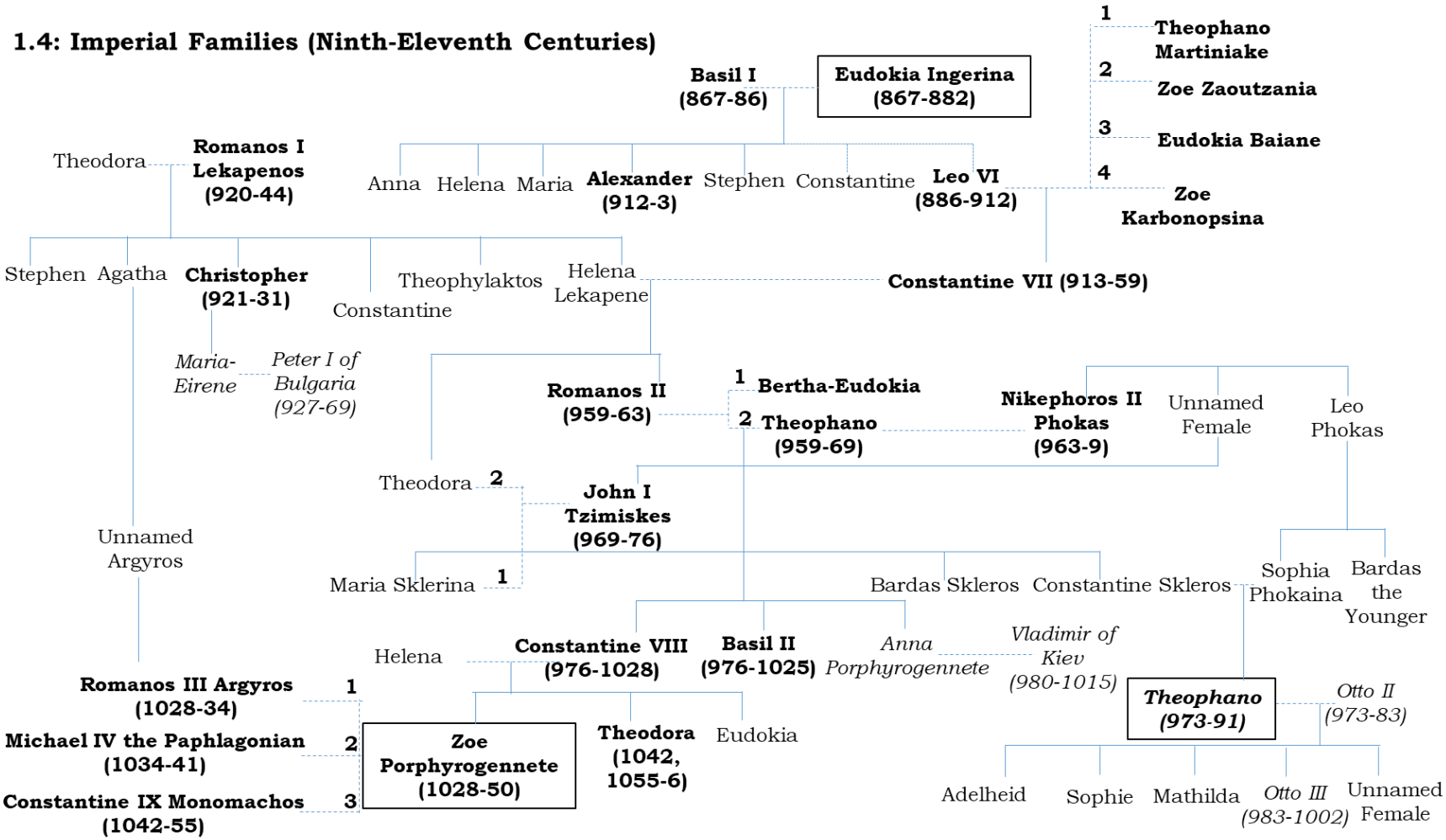
1.3b: Extended Family of Anicia Juliana

*Information broadly taken from Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena', p.55.

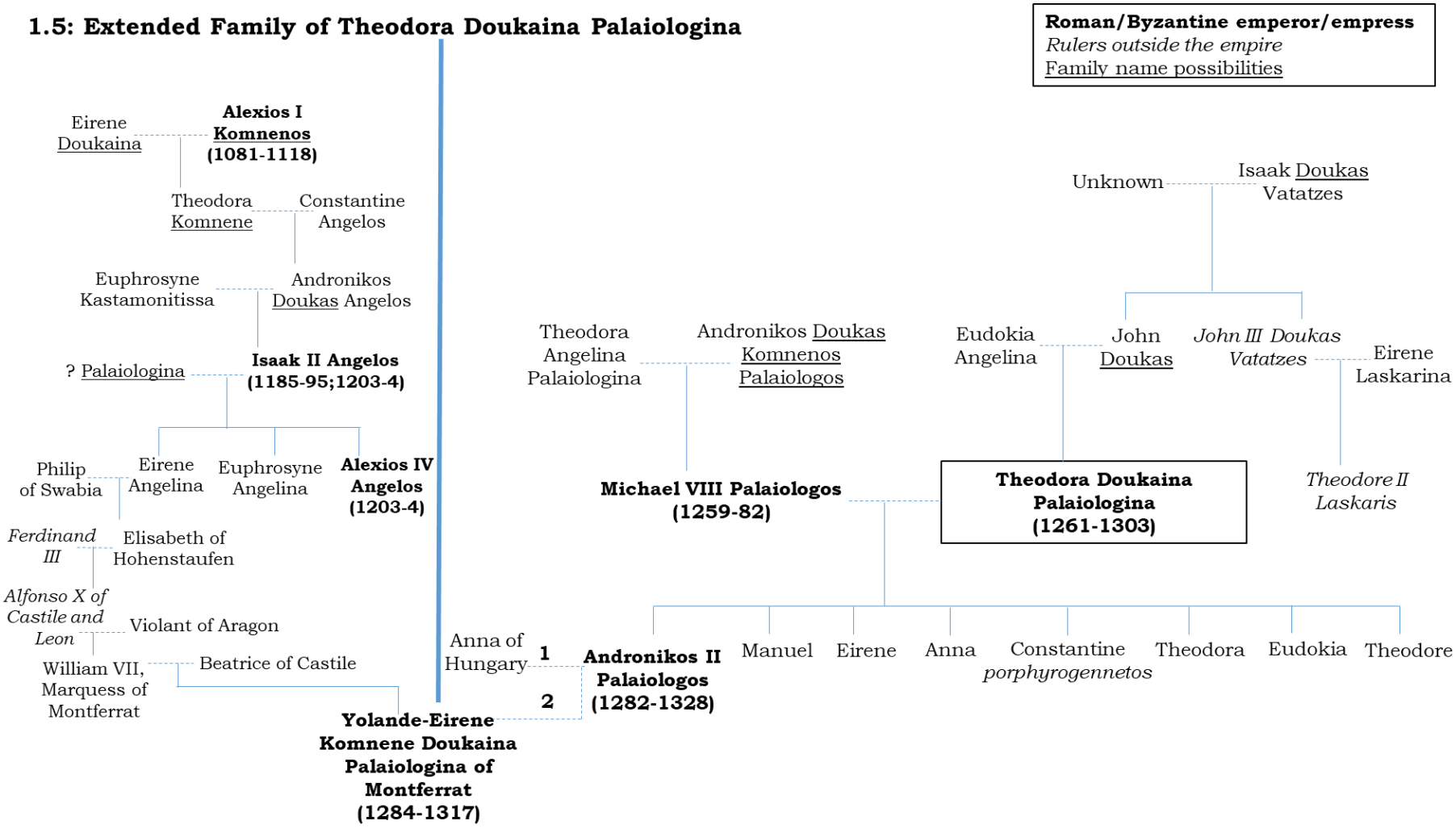
Roman/Byzantine emperor/empress
Western Roman emperor/empress



1.4: Imperial Families (Ninth-Eleventh Centuries)



1.5: Extended Family of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologina



1.6: Extended Family of Maria Angelina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina

Roman/Byzantine emperor/empress
Despotes/consort of Epiros
Family name possibilities